Duquesne University:

# Broadway Translations

P-21

*"Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale*
*Her infinite variety."*

Broadway Translations

# THREE PLAYS OF PLAUTUS

THE SLIP-KNOT (*RUDENS*)
THE CROCK OF GOLD (*AULULARIA*)
THE TRICKSTER (*PSEUDOLUS*)

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# INTRODUCTION

## PLAUTUS: HIS LIFE AND TIMES

Plautus is one of the very few really romantic figures in the history of Roman Literature; romantic, gay, and adventurous. The tale of his life is not told to us by any ancient writer with the fullness that Livy gives to the record of that other romantic adventurer who was his contemporary; but, if we had it, we should probably find the Odyssey of Plautus' career at least as exciting and as worthy of study as the prose Iliad which takes Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus for its hero. The general and the poet were men of very different origin and of very different character; but they had one point in common; they both possessed the divine spark of genius, which, rare everywhere and at all times, was especially rare in early Rome. Both might well have believed themselves to be picked out as her favourites by Fortune; for, if there was no reason in the nature of things why the young untried aristocrat should have been appointed to command the Roman army, there was also no reason at first to expect that the poor starveling who came from Umbria to seek a humble livelihood in the capital should have become the chief comic poet of the Roman stage.

English tourists in Italy travelling through the

province of Emilia—the modern district that takes its name from the great Aemilian road which Plautus saw built—seldom get further east than Bologna. Bologna is the junction on the railway from Milan for Florence to the south, Venice to the north, and Rimini to the east. Faced by this triple choice, most voyagers prefer the picturesque waterways of San Marco or the green slopes of the Tuscan hills to the cold winds and bleak marshes of the Adriatic coast. Some few, however, go eastwards to visit Rimini, or Ravenna, or that smallest of independent states, the Republic of San Marino. And it is these latter enterprising spirits who are most likely to discover Sarsina, whose greatest glory is that it was the birthplace of Plautus.

Sarsina, though it is still the seat of a bishopric dating from the third century of our era, is now but a small place of some three thousand inhabitants. It is pleasantly situated on one of the spurs of the northern Apennines, and the river Savio, the ancient Sapis, rising in the higher ground behind the town, flows round the walls before it descends into the lower plains, to enter the sea ten miles south of Ravenna, just north of the little Rubicon which was the ancient boundary between Italy and Gaul. The marsh country in the near vicinity, stretching towards the lagoons of Ravenna, and intersected by many streams, is on a dull day somewhat dreary; but when the sun shines, it is bright enough, and to an English eye familiar with the Norfolk Broads

or the view over the marshes from Rye, it offers a pleasant reminiscence of home.

Such importance as Sarsina possesses now comes from the pastures among the hills, which are still as famous as they were in Roman times for their milk and their cheese, and are still as full of dormice as they were in Martial's day. A few ruins—the most striking those of the public baths—testify faintly to its ancient greatness: otherwise there is little to distinguish it from scores of other Italian village-towns. But, when Plautus was born there, 254 B.C., or at least in the generation before his birth, Sarsina was more than a village, more than a town; it was the capital city of the great Umbrian race, from whom the Samnites in all their tribes, the Hirpini, the Marsi, and the Peligni, Ovid's people, were but offshoots. Sarsina then gave its name to all the surrounding country, so that it was over the men of Sarsina *and* the Umbrians that both Roman consuls in the year 266 B.C. celebrated the triumph that is recorded in the *Fasti*. Even as late as 225 B.C. Sarsina and Umbria are put side by side as Roman allies, furnishing together twenty-thousand men to the army, and the Sapinian tribe of which we hear 205 B.C. was almost certainly composed of people from this locality. By the middle of the third century B.C., however, the political importance of Sarsina was waning. The battle of Sentinum, 296 B.C., fought close by, where the Roman general Decius Mus devoted himself to death in order to

secure his country's victory, decided once for all the question of Roman supremacy in Italy; and thenceforth for the other races of the peninsula it was only a question of consenting, willingly or unwillingly, to the ultimate necessity of alliance. The Umbrians, who were a pugnacious, hot-tempered people, full-blooded, convivial, and lovers of all the pleasures of the flesh, were no more inclined to submit to Roman discipline than the Saxons of our East Anglia were disposed to accept the Normans as overlords; and, if we possessed a full record of those days, we should probably read of many a fierce encounter. But, as Mommsen says, our information comes to us like the sound of bells from a town that has been sunken in the sea. All we know is that the Roman State was continually growing, the Umbrian decaying, and, when the First Punic War ended in 242 B.C. with a complete victory over Carthage, it was to Rome that all the more vigorous minds in Italy turned. Among them the young Umbrian who left his parents to their poverty in Sarsina, probably about the year 230 B.C., and trudged his way southwards down the newly made Flaminian Way.

Rome was not, of course, in those days the magnificent capital which it afterwards became. If Augustus found it a city of brick and left it a city of marble, to Plautus' eyes its buildings would rather have shown timber and thatch. But things were already changing quickly, and in the face of

Greek luxury the old simplicity of Roman life soon disappeared. The generals, who had been entertained by King Hiero in his Syracusan palace, returned home with a very different standard of taste from that which had satisfied their fathers. Among the spectacles with which they had been regaled were doubtless performances of the comedies of Epicharmus and the tragedies of Euripides—the first native to Sicily, the second immensely popular there; and one of the first results of their foreign experiences was a desire to establish in their own city also some form of theatrical entertainment. Livius Andronicus, the Greek schoolmaster, was already in Rome at their orders, prepared to adapt the Greek masterpieces to Roman tastes: with him as manager, a troup of actors and stage-hands was soon formed, and in 240 B.C. at the Ludi Romani a Greek tragedy and a Greek comedy were both presented in Latin dress.

Titus, son of Titus of Sarsina—to give him the designation by which at first he was known, before the nickname of "Plautus" ("Splay-foot") was invented for him—on his arrival had one pressing problem at once to solve, the problem of getting his daily bread. Fortunately for him, slaves were not then as numerous in Rome as they afterwards became, and there were still some trades and professions of the humbler and more laborious sort whereat a free man might earn a living; among them, fortunately again, this new business to which

the stranger was drawn by his own natural inclination, the business of the stage. So it was that as a stage-hand in the service of a theatrical manager, perhaps Livius Andronicus himself, he started his career. Like another dramatist after him, who held horses' heads in Blackfriars, Plautus had the great advantage of seeing the life of the theatre from within, an impartial and often an indifferent spectator, before he became first an actor, and then a writer for the stage.

Of the next decade in Plautus' life we know little; as little as we know of Shakespeare in the eight years that passed between the time that he left Stratford in 1584 and the time that he emerges as a successful dramatist in 1592. Our one definite piece of information about Plautus is that he also was successful in a material sense, and saved enough money to leave the stage and start afresh as a merchant. From this, however, we may justifiably infer another fact, that he passed from the condition of workman to that of actor or actor-manager, and that he was so far a popular favourite that he commanded a salary on which it was possible to save. Furthermore, the character of the parts he played may be guessed with some certainty, for about this time he gained a second nickname, "Maccus" ("The Clown"), and Maccus is one of the stock-characters in the Atellan plays.

These *Fabulae Atellanae*, so called from Atella,

a small town in Campania, are among the most interesting things that the Italian genius produced, and were the only really popular form of drama—if we except the Plautine comedies—that the Romans ever had, surviving for many centuries until the pantomime-shows of the Empire engulphed all forms of spoken play together. In them, scene, plot, and characters were more or less fixed; the dialogue, spoken or sung, and the gestures were improvised by the actors. The chief personages were male; Maccus the wanton, dissolute hero; Pappus the weak, old simpleton; Dossennus the cunning sharper; Bucco, the loud, noisy talker; and Manducus, the glutton; the women, Lamia and Mania, took the second place. To a refined taste both action and dialogue would have seemed coarse and vulgar, but the Romans were not refined, and the Atellans exactly suited them. Being a genuine product of Italian soil they have, throughout the ages, tended to reappear again in slightly different shapes, especially in South and in North Italy, in Sicily, and in Venice. The '*Commedia dell arte*', for example, is their direct descendant, and Punchinello, Pantaleone, Brighetta, Pulcinella, Arlecchino, and Il Dottore are but modern names for the old stock parts. From Italy they passed into France and England; Scaramouche, Pierrot, and Pierrette are perhaps slightly more refined than their originals, but Punch and Judy, Clown and Pantaloon, are very close to the primary stock.

From being an actor in these plays Plautus became a merchant; a change of occupation not so startling as in our language it appears. A merchant—*mercator*—in ancient times did not necessarily resemble our respectable shop-keeper, who may never have travelled more than fifty miles from his own door. The Roman "merchant" was a merchant-adventurer who owned or chartered a ship, and sailed on hazardous voyages to foreign lands, exposed to all the dangers of storms and pirates.

> "luctantem Icariis fluctibus Africum
> mercator metuens otium et oppidi
> laudat rura sui: mox reficit ratis
> quassas, indocilis pauperiem pati."

The profits were great, but the risks were great also, and in the case of Plautus the money he had laboriously made was swept away, and he was reduced again to poverty. Whether his disasters were caused in any way by the Hannibalian War which, like a sudden tempest, burst upon Italy in 218 B.C., we cannot now tell; but it is probable that the war and his failure were at least coincident in time, and that when he returned to Rome there was little opportunity for play-acting. Ticinus, Trebia, Trasimene, and Cannae, in succession were fought and lost, while Hannibal marched up and down the country-side burning and ravaging, until Capua and Syracuse both fell into his hands. Though Plautus was not yet a Roman citizen, his people were allies of Rome, and he almost certainly spent

most of the years between 218 and 211 under arms: he may well have been among the troops with Marcellus who recaptured Syracuse in 212, and may then have joined the army besieging Capua in time to see that proud city taken and destroyed by Rome.

The fall of Capua and, two years later, the crowning mercy of the Metaurus allowed Rome to disband some of her armies, and Plautus returned again to civil life. He was now a man of forty-five, red-haired, with a rather dark complexion and ruddy cheeks, a big stomach, long head and sharp piercing eyes, fat legs and very large feet. Like Odysseus, he had wandered far and was acquainted with many cities. He had been an actor, a merchant, a soldier: he had probably visited most of the coast-lands of the Mediterranean, and he possessed at least four languages, Umbrian, Latin, Greek, and Carthaginian. Yet, as has happened with other discharged soldiers, there seemed at first no place waiting for him. The theatre at Rome had started again with fresh vigour; for the government was now anxious to keep the people cheerful and amused, until the war should reach its inevitable end; but he was too old and battered to take up the actor's trade once more. All his painfully acquired knowledge of men and books he found of no monetary value, and finally he was reduced to taking service as a journeyman-miller, sometimes wheeling a small hand-mill round the streets and grinding the householders'

corn for them, sometimes working in his employer's shop. It was the dark hour before the dawn: the very hopelessness of his life made a new effort necessary; and at last one day in the mill-shed, perhaps while reading a play of Menander, as he watched the ass turning the pole, Plautus resolved himself to try his hand as an author. His first plays, the *Addictus* and the *Saturio*, were written, if we accept the tradition, while he was still a day-labourer. Their success—for they were both apparently accepted and paid for by a manager—released the writer from manual bondage and set him free for creative work.

Of the extant plays the first two probably were the *Miles Gloriosus*, not quite in its present shape, and the *Mercator*. In both cases, perhaps, the choice of the Greek original was suggested by Plautus' own experiences, and in neither has the author discovered the lyrical gift that he afterwards so greatly developed. These two were performed before the end of the War; the *Miles* in 204 B.C., for it alludes to the unfortunate plight of Naevius, condemned to prison because of his satirical attacks on the Metelli. The *Cistellaria* also by an allusion to the Carthaginians and the penalties to be exacted from them—"*Poeni poenas sufferant*"—can be dated about 202, while the *Stichus* we know by indisputable evidence was produced 200 B.C., probably about the same time as the *Poenulus*.

By this time, however, a new and less difficult war had begun. From the partition of Alexander's world-empire after 323 B.C. there had risen three great kingdoms: Egypt, a cautious commercial state; Macedonia, an aggressive power with a strong army, and a military caste; Syria, a huge and unwieldy empire, important by its size but lacking in real strength. The Republic of the West was now brought, almost against her will, into contact with this Eastern world, and was compelled to teach that world one or two rather sharp lessons before their respective positions were realized. The process took only about ten years, and the period of Plautus' greatest dramatic activity coincides with the period when Rome became undisputed mistress of the world. The *Menaechmi* and the *Asinaria* were probably written in the first years of the Macedonian War, and the *Amphitryo* may well have appeared in 196 B.C., when another Titus, the great Quinctius Flamininus, returned in triumph to Rome to celebrate the victory of Cynocephalae. Of all the plays the *Amphitryo* is the most cleverly designed to suit every variety of Roman taste, grave or gay; and it is at least a likely conjecture that it was in reward for this that the Roman phil-Hellenes at this time gave Plautus the grant of Roman citizenship. In the Prologue to the *Mercator* he is still "Maccus Titus", in the *Asinaria* "Maccus" simply; but the time had now come for him to assume the three names that a Roman bore. The decision rested with

the aediles, who were also the magistrates responsible for the theatre, and the choice ultimately made, "Titus Maccius Plautus," recalled both the new citizen's inveterate love of punning, and also his long association with the stage. There was already a Roman "gens Maccia": what more appropriate than to join to it Maccus the Clown, and allow him to use his other sobriquet as a family name?

After the defeat of Philip foreign politics in Rome were for a brief period overshadowed by a domestic crisis—whether the Oppian Laws restricting women's expenditure on dress should or should not be repealed. To this burning question there are references in the *Epidicus* and the *Aulularia*, while the *Casina* and *Persa* seem to belong to the same time. The *Curculio* can be dated as just subsequent to 193 B.C., and it was probably followed by the *Mostellaria*, the *Rudens*, the *Trinummus*, and the *Captivi*. These latter two are somewhat more serious than the others, and might seem to indicate the increasing gravity of age; but the last three comedies, *Bacchides*, *Pseudolus*, *Truculentus*, which almost certainly close the list, return to the old vigorous treatment. They are all masterpieces of comic verse, and the *Bacchides* can stand comparison for humour of incident with the funniest farce of our generation, Feydeau's *Occupe toi d'Amelie*, while in literary execution, of course, it is far superior.

The *Captivi*, the scene of which is laid in Aetolia, may possibly have been produced in 191 during the

war against Antiochus; for, after Glabrio had won the battle of Thermopylae, the Aetolians were for a time the centre of interest, and had to be rescued from the proper consequences of their folly by the intervention of Flamininus himself. In any case the *Bacchides* certainly appeared after the war was over and the crushing victory of Magnesia had brought down in ruins the imposing fabric of the Seleucid empire. By that time even the Romans were satiated with success, and in the play there is a half-sarcastic reference to the four triumphs which the victorious generals insisted on celebrating in 189. The *Pseudolus* and the *Truculentus* followed the *Bacchides*, and in 184, the year of Cato's censorship, Plautus' long and varied life came to a happy end at the very height of his dramatic vogue. A few months later Hannibal died in forced exile, Scipio in inglorious but voluntary retirement; and it was the humble soldier in their wars rather than the two great generals whose death was the most regretted. On the poet's tomb the following epitaph was inscribed:

"postquam est mortem aptus Plautus, Comoedia luget
scena est deserta dein Risus Ludus Jocusque,
et Numeri innumeri simul omnes collacrimarunt."

"Plautus is dead, and on the empty stage
Sad Comedy doth lie
Weeping the brightest star of all our age,
While artless Melody
And Jest and Mirth and Merriment forlorn
Their poet mourn.

In after-years also, when the ambitions of Hannibal and Scipio had become a theme for schoolboys' essays, the plays of Plautus still held the stage. The comedies of Terence in the next generation were never serious rivals, and, though, under Sulla, Pomponius and Novius brought the Atellans for the first time into literature, Plautus remained supreme and was continually being revived. For such performances some of our present prologues were plainly written; that of the *Casina*, for example, where the manager says:

"Seeing that you like ancient deeds and ancient sayings, it is only reasonable that you should like old plays. Indeed, the new comedies that are being produced now-a-days are greater trash than our new coinage even. Understanding then, gentlemen, from popular gossip that your hearts were set on the Plautine theatre, we are going now to produce for you one of his old comedies. The elder men among you have applauded it in the past: to the younger generation, I know, it will be a novelty."

Moreover, the greatness of Plautus' poetical achievement was then more clearly recognized than it has been at some periods since. Aelius Stilo (fl. 100 B.C.), one of the first Roman scholars, said: "If the Muses wished to speak Latin, they would speak in the language of Plautus"; and Cicero is equally enthusiastic—"duplex omnino est iocandi genus, unum inliberale, petulans, flagitiosum, obscenum, alterum elegans, urbanum, ingeniosum, face-

tum, quo genere non modo Plautus noster et Atticorum antiqua comoedia, sed etiam philosophorum Socraticorum libri referti sunt"—*De Officiis*, i, 29, 104.

In Cicero's day the very popularity of Plautus was becoming a danger to his reputation, and plays were foisted off upon the public as Plautine which had never come from the master's pen. One of the most useful tasks that the great polymath Terentius Varro undertook was to examine this mass of doubtful and spurious material and to establish a canon. From one-hundred-and-thirty plays Varro selected twenty-one as certainly, nineteen more as probably, genuine; and his "certain" list is the collection that we now possess. Of the nineteen "doubtfuls" the *Saturio*, *Addictus*, *Nervularia*, and *Fretum* have the best credentials; but none of these is now extant, and it is probable that Varro, having settled his list, published the twenty-one certain plays together and this became the standard edition.

While Cicero and Varro are ardent admirers of Plautus, neither Horace nor Quintilian are at all cordial. Quintilian quotes Stilo's praise, but dryly remarks that in his own opinion Roman comedy is a very halting affair compared with the Greek. Horace for his part roundly reproaches previous generations for "approving the verses and the jokes of Plautus in an uncritical, not to say foolish, fashion". It can hardly, however, be expected that Horace should approve of an author who so totally

contravenes his most cherished maxims. "Write with care" said the sedulous artist:

> "nocturna versate manu, versate diurna
> exemplaria Graeca."

Plautus persisted in turning out play after play in quick succession, and only used his Greek originals as a background for his own humorous inventions. "Art for art's sake: take no thought of money"—said the protegé of Maecenas on his Sabine farm; Plautus worked strictly on a cash basis, and regarded the payment he received for his work as a thing of considerable importance. "Avoid the profane and despicable mob"—said the fastidious civil servant: Plautus borrowed from and even exaggerated the humours of the populace.

Horace and Quintilian doubtless influenced opinion to some extent during the first century of our era, but with the Age of the Antonines there came a great revival of interest both in all the early Latin writers and especially in Plautus. Aulus Gellius, the author of *Attic Nights*, tells us most of what we know about the poet's life, and constantly refers to him in language of the greatest admiration. Varro's edition was probably revised and republished about this time, and of this second-century issue the Ambrosian manuscript written in the third century A.D. is doubtless a copy. Consequently in the case of Plautus, and in his case almost alone, we can trace the history of our manuscript tradition by known stages back to the author's own times.

# PLAUTUS THE POET

Since the days of Ritschl, whose edition of the text and critical essays initiated the serious study of Plautus, a succession of brilliant scholars, English and foreign, have laboured to put the greatest of Roman dramatists in his true light. Fleckeisen, Ussing, and Leo abroad; Palmer, Sonnenschein, and Lindsay with us, have all contributed to a better understanding of Plautus' text and a clearer comprehension of his dramatic genius. But even now a note of foolish depreciation may sometimes be heard: "a hack writer," "a copyist," "a mere adapter," "coarse, tedious, and careless": these are some of the descriptions that may still be culled from the lips of lecturers and the pages of text-books. That Ennius is a writer of the highest genius and the father of Latin poetry has become an article of faith: to Plautus, who was in fact his senior by fifteen years, considerably less than justice is often shown: the roughness and obscurity of Ennius are regarded as the natural consequences of his early date, the easy flow of the Plautine lyric goes unnoticed and unpraised.

What Ennius did was to force Latin poetry into a mould for which it had no natural liking, to compel a language trochaic in rhythm to obey the laws of the dactylic hexameter. Similar attempts have been

made occasionally in English ; but we have not the perseverance of the Romans, and these attempts always have been ignominiously abandoned. That, after generations of painful endeavour, Virgil succeeded at last in creating a perfect harmony of sound and sense does not affect the main issue, for Virgil stands alone among Roman poets, and the price paid for his success was the stifling for many centuries of the Italian muse. As Dr. Mackail has shown, the trochaic rhythm may sometimes be heard in undertone, as in the two lines from the *Lydia* :

" Luna, tuus tecum est : cur non est et mea mecum
Luna, dolor nosti quid sit : miserere dolentis "

which he transposes thus :

Luna, tuus est ut tecum.
Cur non est et mea mecum ?
Luna, quid sit dolor sentis :
Miserere tu dolentis.

To an English ear at least, there can be no doubt which of the two arrangements is the more musical and the more in accordance with the true genius of the language.

Latin poetry, if left to itself, would have been alliterative, assonant, accentual ; very much, in fact, what English poetry is ; and Plautus was beginning to develop it on these lines. But, after the time of Ennius it fell into the hands of scholars —" doctus " is the highest term of praise that a classical poet can give himself—and became denationalized. In the attempts made to master an

alien form, hexameter, sapphic, alcaic, elegiac, there is always a sense of effort; and this is one of the reasons why so much of Latin poetry must always seem artificial. Only the hendecasyllabic, as it is used by Catullus and Martial, goes with any real ease. If we wish to find natural verse, we must turn either to the last stage of Latin, when the people were singing the hymns of the Christian Church, "Pange linqua", "Corde natus", "Ut queant laxis", and the rest; or else we must go to the beginnings.

Of early verse the epitaph written by Naevius for himself is often quoted as the finest example:—

Mortalis immortalis flere si foret fas,
Flerent divae Camenae Naevium poetam.
Itaque postquam est Orcino traditus thesauro,
obliti sunt Romae loquier lingua Latina.

In its own grave music this is unsurpassed: but there are scores of songs scattered among the Plautine comedies that in their lighter melody are equally good as samples of native inspiration. In the *Rudens* alone we have three elaborate pieces, Palaestra's lament, the fisherman's chorus, and Gripus' song of triumph: from the *Curculio* comes this simple serenade which almost sings itself.

pessuli heus pessuli,
vos saluto lubens,
vos amo, vos volo,
vos peto atque obsecro,
gerite amanti mihi morem, amoenissumi.

Bolt and bar, bolt and bar!
Listen to my greeting:
You my trusty comrades are;
You I am entreating.
Hearken to a lover's plea;
Let my lady come to me.

Leo has spent much labour in trying to establish some connexion between these "cantica" of Plautus and the monodies of Euripides on the one hand, the Grenfell erotic fragment on the other. His parallels are more ingenious than convincing, and for the source of the Plautine lyric it does not seem necessary to look further than to the Fescennine Songs, and those refrains which the Roman soldiers traditionally sung at triumphs, such as:

"urbani servate uxores, moechum calvum adduximus"

and this piece of camp wisdom:

"plecteris si recte facies, si non facies rex eris."

For our benefit Dame Fortune arranged a marriage between that elegant and rather anæmic Greek maiden, the New Comedy, and the very vigorous but somewhat coarse Italian stripling, the Fescennine Song. The result of this union was the Plautine comedy, which might have been the progenitor of a line of lusty descendants, but as a matter of fact died without offspring. Neither as poet nor as dramatist did Plautus have successors. Catullus is almost the only other Roman lyric poet and his

epithalamia may rank with Plautus at his best; but even he was tempted by the Alexandrians, and wasted his gift of song on the frigid artifices of the *Peleus and Thetis*. The *Odes* of Horace are odes only in name, and certainly do not lend themselves to a musical setting; while as for Terence he keeps strictly to his long iambic and trochaic lines and never ventures upon even the semblance of a song. Terence gives the impression of an author compelled by convention to write in metre—like some of our practitioners in blank verse—but who would have been more comfortable in prose. There is as much difference between the look of his pages and those of Plautus—if the latter are properly printed, which they often are not—as there is between the look of an opera-libretto and a French tragedy in Alexandrines.

But a play of Plautus differs from a play of Terence not only thus in outward form: it differs also in its inner spirit. They both are called comedies, but they no more resemble one another in style than *The Merry Wives of Windsor* resembles *The Way of the World*. The *Persa* of Plautus, for example, may be based upon a Greek original; but in its present form it is a purely Italian product, as typically Roman as *H.M.S. Pinafore* is typically English. The *Adelphi* of Terence on the other hand, a close and probably an improved version of a comedy by Menander, is in itself neither Greek nor Roman in character. It is written in Latin, it is true—just as the words of *Carmen* are written in

French—but in its essence it is cosmopolitan, and has all the advantages and the disadvantages that accrue to an author who is a citizen of the world and writes for an audience of critics rather than for the common average man.

For the reader to turn from Plautus to Terence is as though one were to pass from a crowded market-place into a secluded churchyard: or, if that comparison seems unfair to Terence, at least into some quiet library or select club, whose frequenters, even if they are not dead, are removed by several degrees from the coarser necessities of existence. Terence writes with wonderful skill and shapes his plots with consummate dexterity, but with him begins that divorce between life and literature which eventually made Latin a dead language. Plautus is at the very opposite pole: he is a man of the people, and he writes for the people of things which they and he know by daily experience, using language which only by his metrical skill is differentiated from ordinary speech. His chief object is to interest and amuse his audience; for if he failed in these two respects his work was vain labour and his livelihood disappeared. Such is his position—the position of most writers to-day; and it is one of the chief reasons for his alertness and bustling vivacity.

It must be remembered also that Plautus was essentially a war-poet. After the long and almost

intolerable strain of the Hannibalian campaigns even Roman gravity required some relaxation, and Plautus supplied exactly what was wanted. He is a practical dramatist writing for the stage, not for the study, and writing always with one eye open for a stage-effect. What his audience clamoured for was fun, and plenty of it: nothing very subtle, nothing very refined, but stuff that old soldiers could appreciate. If it had literary merit, so much the better for the small class who knows what good writing means. But fun was the first requisite, and no author who did not recognize that obligation was likely to succeed at Rome. It is this dependence on popular favour that makes Plautus such an unique figure. He is neither patron nor client. He is not a member of the privileged classes writing for his own satisfaction, like Cato, Varro, Lucretius, and Tacitus: he is not a dependent of the privileged class writing at another's dictation, like Ennius, Terence, Horace, and Martial: his only master is the many-headed multitude, the best master that an author can have.

It is plain that Plautus enjoyed his work. His slaves and courtesans, his pimps and parasites, his men about town young or old, are sketched with gusto from the life. Through all his plays there runs a vein of boisterous good-humour, and a frank delight in the devices whereby the heavy fathers are fooled and irresponsible youth triumphs over experienced but purblind age. Terence's comedies

were written in early manhood, but they have the gravity of advanced years: Plautus writes in later life and shows a boyish jollity. If it were not, indeed, for his naïve enjoyment of trickery, Plautus might be considered immoral. But in reality his rogues, male and female, are as innocent and as little likely to corrupt as is the clown in a Christmas pantomime with his stolen sausages and his red-hot poker. There were other causes than the Plautine comedies which led to the swift deterioration of the Roman character, and Mommsen is too harsh when he says:

"If, therefore, the literary historian, while fully acknowledging the very respectable talents of the Roman comedians, cannot recognize in their mere stock of translations a product either artistically important or artistically pure, the judgment of history respecting its moral aspects must necessarily be far more severe. The Greek comedy which formed its basis was morally of little consequence, inasmuch as it was simply on the same level of corruption with its audience; but the Roman drama was, at an epoch when men were wavering between the old austerity and the new corruption, the great school at once of Hellenism and vice. This Attico-Roman comedy, with its prostitution of body and soul usurping the name of love—equally immoral in shamelessness and sentimentality, with its offensive and unnatural magnanimity, with its uniform glorification of a life of debauchery, with its mixture of rustic coarseness and foreign refinement, was one continuous lesson of Romano-Hellenic demoralization, and was felt as such."

(*History of Rome*, ii, 441.)

Plautus himself is nothing like so severe as this with the creatures of his imagination. His experience of life had shown him that there is something of good in everyone, and that the best way to deal with a rogue is to laugh at him. As he is a comic writer, it is upon his rascals that he spends most of his effort, viewing them with as much tolerance as the greatest English dramatist and the greatest English novelist extend to their less reputable creations. Syra and Mrs. Gamp, Pyrgopolinices and Falstaff, Cappadox and Joe Bagshot, Chrysalus and Antolycus, Epidicus and Alfred Jingle: these are some of the parallels that come to mind at once, and the list might be almost indefinitely extended.

Of Shakespeare indeed, in dealing with Plautus, we are continually reminded. How Plautus learnt Greek, and how he became acquainted with the writings of Menander, Philemon, Diphilus, and the other writers of the New Comedy, is a problem of exactly the same nature as has puzzled some of our own people in relation to Shakespeare. That the young countryman from Stratford, compelled to earn his living in London as a stage underling, should show acquaintance with Latin, French, and Italian literature seems to certain minds so impossible that the Bacon theory has been invented: in other words, the gnat has been rejected and the camel swallowed. In both cases alike, with Shakespeare as with Plautus, the explanation is simple: it lies in the one word "Genius".

## THE PLAUTINE THEATRE

The best and indeed the only way to get a true appreciation of Plautus is to read through his twenty surviving plays in a good modern text: the Berlin edition of Leo and the Oxford edition of Lindsay are both to be recommended. It must be remembered always that where Plautus excels is not in the plot—for which usually he is not responsible—but in the dialogue; and frequently his verbal jokes are extremely difficult to represent in another language. Moreover, he is a poet, writing in verse, with a very keen ear for the comic effect to be gained by a change of rhythm, while a prose translation, however close it may be to the sense of the words, must necessarily fail to give the sound, which is often equally important. For these reasons it will be evident that neither a translation of the dialogue nor an analysis of the plot will touch the real reason of Plautus' greatness. But, as he is a very unequal writer, the following brief account of the plays may be of some service in guiding a reader's choice.

The *Amphitryon*, the source of Molière's play and of the English *Jack Juggler*, is in some ways the most interesting of all the series. It is probably based on a Greek original, not of the New but of the Middle Comedy, and has its nearest parallel in the *Plutus* of Aristophanes. Described as a *tragico-*

*comoedia* in the prologue, which delicately hints at the dislike a Roman audience felt for the highbrow drama, it deals farcically with an ancient legend of mythology, very much in the same fashion that M. Tristan Bernard uses in his amusing but scarcely edifying *La petite femme de Loth*. The tragic element is supplied by the divine and heroic personages, Jupiter king of heaven, Mercury his son and messenger, Amphitryon general of Thebes, and Alcmena his wife: the comic by three ordinary people of real life, Sosia "Sammy Saveall", Amphitryon's valet; Bromia "Betty Bustle", a servant girl; and Blepharo "Tom Keeneyes", a pilot. Definitely serious is the account of Amphitryon's battle, which must have been very much to Roman taste; also the narrative of the storm that attends the birth of Alcmena's children: definitely comic the long dialogue between Mercury and Sosia in the first act. The dramatic situation of the wife with two husbands, which might have been handled grossly, is treated with some delicacy, and the virtuous Alcmena is almost an Euripidean heroine.

The *Asinaria*, the "Comedy of Asses"—a poor title, but titles are not Plautus' strong point—is a slight but quite amusing farce. An old man, Demaenetus, afraid of his rich wife, arranges with his two slaves, Libanus and Leonida, to defraud her of the proceeds arising from the sale of some asses, and to give the money to their son that he may enjoy his mistress' society for a year. A rival suitor, Diabolus, reveals the plot, and the old man, who

has bargained for one night with the girl, is discovered by his wife in her company and dragged home to the refrain of " Surge, amator, i domum ". The scene between the son and the Madame, who is also the mother of his light o' love, the dialogue between the two slaves who insist on having their share of the girl's caresses, and the episode where the young man unwillingly looks on at his father's love-making, find a nearer parallel in some of the situations in Smollett's novels than in anything else in English literature. The play is adapted from the Greek of Demophilus' *The Ass Driver*, but the cynical humour which is its chief charm is probably due to Plautus himself. The finale, where the old man is dragged away leaving the young lover with his mistress, is a masterpiece of bold handling: if it were taken seriously it would be demoralizing; but it is not meant to be serious.

The *Aulularia*, the " Pot of Gold ", from which Molière derived *L'Avare*, is less Plautine than most of the plays. The original was probably the *Hydria* of Menander, and many of the characters, the respectable old man Megadorus, his respectable sister Eunomia, her erring but still respectable son Lyconides, seem to have been left nearly as Menander invented them. Quite in the Menandran style is the scene between the young man and Euclio, where Lyconides is trying to confess that he has seduced the miser's daughter, while the old man thinks that the " illam " is his stolen pot of gold. The plot also is pure Menander. Lyconides has seduced the

daughter of the miser Euclio ; his uncle Metrodorus asks the girl in marriage ; but the truth is discovered in time, and the young pair are legally united : a denouement very far from moral but satisfying the claims of the Respectable. Plautus appears himself, as usual, in the less reputable characters, the cooks, music-girls, and hangers-on who make such amusing interludes to the serious action of the play. Above all, we see his hand in the vivid touches that make Euclio, in spite of everything, a sympathetic personage, and render his reformation credible. The finale of the play is unfortunately lost, owing to a gap in the manuscript, but apparently, as is usual with Menander, all came right at the end.

The *Bacchides*, the " Two Gay Sisters ", is extremely realistic, and contains in its hero Chrysalus one of the most impudent and amusing of adventurers. The two sisters Bacchis, " as much alike as two drops of milk ", courtesans by trade, have been living apart, one at Athens, where the scene of the play is laid, and the other at Samos. The opening scenes are lost with the end of the *Aulularia*, and where we now begin Bacchis of Samos has just returned to Athens under the care of a Captain Cleomachus who has engaged her affections for a year. Meanwhile a young Athenian in Asia, Mnesilochus, has written to his friend Pistoclerus asking him to secure the girl's release from her contract, and Pistoclerus going to their house on his behalf falls captive to the charms of the other sister. His

virtuous old pedagogue Lydus bewails his moral downfall, but his artful valet Chrysalus comes to his assistance in extracting money from his father to pay his new mistress. The return of Mnesilochus leads to some scenes of jealousy owing to the resemblance of the two sisters; but the friends are reconciled and with the help of Chrysalus devote themselves to the task, as difficult as the capture of Troy, of hoodwinking Nicobulus, the father of Mnesilochus. How Agamemnon-Chrysalus succeeds in capturing Nicobulus-Ilium, and how the old fathers finally join their sons at the sisters' house form the concluding scenes.

The *Captivi*, the "Prisoners of War", is a signal contrast to the *Bacchides* and to most of Plautus' plays. In the words of the Epilogue, it is composed "with due regard to the proprieties; there are no underhand intrigues, no love-making, no suppositititious children, no tricks to get money". Being quite innocent of female characters, the *Captivi* depends for its interest on male psychology and subtlety of plot, Lessing considering it in this latter particular the best constructed play in existence. The story briefly is this. An Aetolian named Hegio had two sons, Philopolemus and Tyndarus, the latter kidnapped when a child and sold as a slave in Elis to the father of Philocrates. In a war between the two States Philopolemus is taken prisoner by the Eleans, Philocrates, with his slave Tyndarus in attendance, by the Aetolians. Hegio buys the pair to exchange for his son; but Tyndarus, in order to

rescue his young master at once, pretends himself to be Philocrates, while the latter returns home. The plot is discovered, and Tyndarus is sent by Hegio to the stone-quarries. Fortunately, however, Philopolemus and Philocrates return together from Elis; Tyndarus is recognized as his father's son; and the play ends happily. The war-interest of the plot probably recommended it to Plautus for a Roman audience, and his own contributions, the fooling of the Prologue and the character of the melancholy parasite Ergasilus, are in his most delightful vein.

The *Casina*, the "Girl from Casinum", is a Palais Royal farce of the very broadest type. The hero is that familiar figure of the French stage, *le vieux marcheur*; the heroine, if she can be so called, never appears at all. She is a foundling, who has been brought up by Cleostrata, wife of Lysidamus; and, as the old man and his son are both in love with the girl, they intrigue, one against the other, to get her married either to the son's valet Chalinus or to the father's bailiff Olympio, meaning themselves then to enjoy her. Lots are drawn for the girl—the play was sometimes called *Sortientes*, "the Lot-casters"—and the father's candidate wins. Then Cleostrata intervenes, and with the help of her neighbour Myrrhina, herself also afflicted with a volatile husband, and her maid Pardalisca proceeds to thwart her partner's schemes. She spreads the tale abroad that the girl is mad and means to stab the first man who approaches her. Then, when the marriage actually takes place, she substitutes

Chalinus in woman's dress for Casina. The last scenes where Olympio and the old man describe their experiences with the male bride smack very strongly of South Italian soil, and are much too outspoken for an English audience, although doubtless they seemed to the Romans very humorous. The character-study of Lysidamus infatuated with passion, as Euclio is infatuated with avarice, is on a much higher plane. The two may well be compared with Balzac's *Baron Hulot* and *Père Grandet*.

The *Cistellaria*, the " Casket ", as we have it now in our manuscripts is both fragmentary and incomplete. This is the more regrettable inasmuch as we can see from what remains that the play was full of the richest Plautine humour. The plot, taken from Menander's play *The Syrian*, is comparatively unimportant. A young man violates a girl, who, being deserted, exposes her child. Many years later the man marries the woman in ignorance of her past. She confesses, and they endeavour to find their lost daughter. The child has been educated for the profession of courtesan ; but when the play opens she has but one lover, who as soon as the mystery of her birth is cleared up, marries her. All this is trite and stale : but Plautus creates a new interest with his comic rogues, here of the female gender, the old bawd Syra and the maid-servant Halisca, and also with a very life-like picture of the two young lovers, Selenium and Alcesimarchus. The opening scenes, which are still intact, are particularly good, and bear some resemblance to the

beginning of an old-fashioned pantomime. There is the dainty heroine and her girl-friend to whom she confides her love-troubles; there is the red-nosed comedian as the Dame with a pronounced weakness for strong drink; there is the gallant young lover—with songs; and finally there is the good fairy "Helping Hand", who undertakes that all shall end happily.

The *Curculio*, "Master Weevil", takes its title from the name of the one-eyed parasite—alias "Summanus", "the Trickler"—who plays so prominent a part in the action. It is a very pleasant and quite edifying love-story. Planesium, the heroine, has been kidnapped in childhood and has passed into the hands of the pimp Cappadox. But she is still a virgin, and is loved by a young man Phaedromus, who tries with the help of Curculio to borrow money to ransom her. Unsuccessful in this, the parasite steals the signet-ring of Therapontigonus Platagidorus, "Captain Cookson Slapabout", who is also bargaining to buy the girl, and then imposes both on the banker Lyco and the pimp. The girl recognizes the ring as one belonging to her father: it turns out that the captain is her brother; and she marries Phaedromus. The play is an excellent specimen of Plautus' more innocent humour, and all the subordinate characters owe much to his invention: the pimp Cappadox with his enormous stomach keeping vigil in the temple of Aesculapius; his old waiting-woman Leaena with her insatiable thirst; the slave Palinurus so simply businesslike

in matters of the affections; the banker Lyco—"I'm a millionaire, if I don't pay my creditors"; and, most curious of all, the property-man of the theatrical company who, for no particular reason, suddenly appears on the stage in the fourth act and gives a most amusing account of the chief marketing-resorts in Rome.

The *Epidicus*, so called from its hero, one of the author's favourite characters, is a short—it is just half the length of the *Rudens*—and quite amusing play. Young Stratippocles, in love with a flute girl, gets his servant Epidicus to persuade his father Periphanes to buy her, on the pretence that the girl is his natural child. Stratippocles then goes to the war and buys another girl from among the captives, informing Epidicus on his return that he must somehow raise him the money to pay for his new purchase. The long arm of coincidence brings in Philippa, the woman whom Periphanes had seduced, and Epidicus' fraud is discovered. Luckily for him, however, the second girl proves to be indeed the lost daughter, the play ends happily, and Epidicus is given his freedom. The play is very cleverly constructed; all the characters and all the incidents are so devised as to leave Epidicus always the centre of interest, and certainly he is one of the cleverest of Plautus' artful dodgers. His long conversation with old Periphanes and his friend old Apoecides is a masterpiece of humorous invention, and the account that he gives the old gentlemen of the mysteries of a lady's wardrobe has quite

a modern touch—" tunics close knit and loose knit, flax-blue and gray-blue, striped and fringed, marigold-yellow and crocus-yellow, shimmys and shammys "—and yet probably it was put in as a topical reference, for when the play was produced the repeal of the Oppian Laws against extravagance in dress was one of the burning questions of the day.

The *Menaechmi*, the " Twins ", is perhaps the best-known, but is by no means the best of Plautus' plays. The plot which depends on the close physical resemblance of the two brothers Menaechmus, one of Epidamnus, the other of Syracuse, lacks both subtlety and variety—faults which Shakespeare scarcely cures in his *Comedy of Errors* by inventing another twin-pair of slaves. One brother has been kidnapped in childhood from Sicily and taken to Greece. The other, seeking him everywhere, comes at last to Epidamnus where he is living in prosperity. Their resemblance causes the cook, the valet, the parasite, the mistress, the wife, the wife's father, and finally the family doctor, to mistake one for the other. By a series of not too probable incidents the two brothers do not meet: finally they come face to face, and the play perforce ends. Most of the first act, where Menaechmus of Epidamnus steals his wife's shawl to present to his mistress—" palla pallorem incutit "—is probably taken straight from the Greek, and is unpleasant in style. Plautus appears only in the parasite Peniculus, " Master Brush, who sweeps the table clean." The other four acts are chiefly interesting as showing how the

characters of the Atellan Farce could be adapted to comedy. Menaechmus of Syracuse is throughout the *compére* : with him appear in short successive scenes of dialogue the buffoon, the gay lady, the bold pantaloon, and the comic doctor.

The *Mercator*, the " Merchant-Venturer ", a title which has little to do with the action, would be a disappointing piece if it were not that it is almost certainly Plautus' first essay at adaptation. In this play it is obvious that he has not realized that his own additions are more attractive that his original. In outward form it is far nearer to a comedy of Terence than any of its successors : there is only one passage in lyric metre—a song given to the doleful young hero—the rest is all in iambics and trochees. The characters, too, are left almost as the Greek author left them, and of definitely Plautine touches there are very few. The plot, taken from Philemon's *Merchant*, is rather dull and very unpleasant. Charinus, a young man, has been sent abroad by his father as a merchant, and on his return brings back a slave-girl with him. His father—" Accherunticus senex, vetus, decrepitus "—falls in love with the girl, and the play is occupied with the various tricks by which he seeks to get possession of her without his wife's knowledge. Finally, the son triumphs and the old man is defeated. In all this there is nothing that is really humorous, and the play is only worth study as an example of origins. Several details—Demipho's dream, for example, and the relations between the two old men—are

repeated in later plays and then handled with much more vigour and freedom.

The *Miles Gloriosus*, "Captain Brag", contains two of the funniest characters that even Plautus ever invented, the boasttul soldier himself "Tower-town-taker", and his humble and obsequious follower "Breadmuncher". The Captain is a first sketch for Falstaff, whom in lechery, boastfulness, and cowardice he strongly resembles, and the play is so far disappointing that we do not see enough of him. After a brilliant opening scene, he fades out of the action and does not reappear until towards the end; and, although there is much good writing and clever stagecraft in the middle part of the play, they do not compensate for the absence of the Captain, whose foibles, if fully developed, would have made a prodigious farce. The plot is this:—Philocomasium, a lady of pleasure, beloved by Pleusicles, has with some unwillingness followed the Captain to Ephesus. The young man's servant Palæstrio, taken by pirates, by the long arm of coincidence comes into the Captain's hands, and informs his master of the girl's address. Pleusicles at once comes to Ephesus and stays with the Captain's neighbour Periplectomenus, a young old-man of fifty-four, who happens—coincidence again—to be his family-friend. A plot is arranged whereby the Captain is made to believe that his neighbour's wife is madly infatuated with him. He dismisses Philocomasium and is himself taken in sham adultery, Periplectomenus being really a bachelor and the wife a woman hired for the purpose.

The *Mostellaria*, the "Haunted House", taken from *The Ghost* of Menander, is excellent in the first act, passable in the other four. In the absence of his father, the hero Philolaches falls in love with a slave-girl Philematium "Kissy", and buys his mistress' freedom. The father Theopropides returns; and, in order to account for the money expended, the slave Tranio pretends that their own house is haunted and therefore they have borrowed to buy the house next door. As a matter of fact, the young man is at that moment entertaining a festive party in the paternal domicile, and Tranio has to invent one thing after another to prevent the old man investigating the mystery. His fraud at last is discovered but young Callidamates, a jovial drunkard, gains his pardon. There is a slight monotony in the closing passages, but the four scenes of the first act are among the most brilliant in all Plautus. The play begins with a long and very funny dialogue between Grumio and Tranio—the names are borrowed by Shakespeare in *The Taming of the Shrew*—the honest countryman and the tricky town-servant: then follows a highly elaborate song by the hero developing a comparison between the life of a man and the building of a house: after that comes a very dexterous toillette scene, Philematium the charming heroine attended by her old duenna Scapha: and to close the act we have the comic drunkard—with song "Si cades, non cades quin cadam tecum".

The *Persa*, the "Persian Stranger", might well be called *The Beggar's Opera*, for its characters are all drawn from the same class of society as those in that famous work, and its plot is equally sordid and realistic. The slave Toxilus, wishing to buy his friend the girl Lemniselenis from the pimp Dordalus, and having no money to purchase her, arranges with the needy parasite Saturio that his fellow-slave Sagaristio disguised as a Persian merchant shall sell Dordalus Saturio's daughter, giving, however, no guarantee of ownership with her. Dordalus falls into the trap and pays over the money which is then used to buy Lemniselenis from him. Saturio claims his daughter as a free-born citizen, and Dordalus is left lamenting. The play is written with immense gusto, and is full of vivid dialogue, sharp repartee, and racy abuse. Dordalus is "feles virginalis", a "maid-mouser" catching girls as a cat catches mice: he is "lutum lenonium, commixtum caeno sterculinum publicum": Toxilus is "perenniserve, lurcho, edax, furax, fugax". As for the parasite, his proud boast is: "pater, avos, proavos, abavos, tritavos, quasi mures semper edimus alienum cibum." The climax of this verbal jesting is reached when Sagaristio, asked for his name, replies: "Vaniloquidorus Virginesvendonides Nugiepiloquides Argentum-exterebronides Tedigniloquides Nugides Palponides Quodsemelarripides Nunquameripides."

The *Poenulus*, the "Little Carthaginian",

adapted from *The Carthaginian* of Menander is a long and rather dull play with little of the distinctive Plautine humour. Two Carthaginian brothers have their children stolen from them—one his only son, the other his two daughters and their nurse. The first brother dies of grief, but his son is bought from the kidnapper by an old man who adopts him and on his death-bed makes him his heir. The two girls are not so fortunate: they are bought by a pimp, and with him come to Calydon, where their cousin is living. He falls in love with one of them; and, when their father Hanno, who is searching the world for them, arrives and their identity is established, he marries her. There are two characters, the pimp Lycus and the slave Milphio, who afford some opportunity for fun; but in this play the humour is rather colourless. The subject apparently struck Plautus as likely to appeal to a Roman audience after the Punic War, and he did not think it necessary to use his own invention freely. There is a long passage in the Carthaginian language in Act V which has sorely puzzled modern scholars, although it was presumably intelligible to a Roman audience. The Prologue is a later addition to the play and of poor workmanship. There are two different versions of the last scene in our texts, and the play has an alternative title—"Uncle Porridge-bolter."

The *Pseudolus* is excellent throughout, in dialogue, comic vigour, and dramatic skill. It contains also two of Plautus' most life-like characters,

that masterpiece of villainy the pimp Ballio—another Vautrin or Macaire—and the crafty but sympathetic slave Pseudolus. Ballio was a favourite part with the great actor Roscius, and there is a tradition that in the portrait of Pseudolus Plautus is really describing himself—"rufus quidam, ventriosus, crassis suris, subniger, magno capite, acutis oculis, ore rubicundo, admodum magnis pedibus." The plot is as follows:—A certain captain, Polymachaeroplagides, has arranged to buy the heroine Phœnicium—"sine ornamentis cum intestinis omnibus"—from the pimp Ballio. Calidorus is in love with her, and asks the help of his slave Pseudolus. The latter arranges with the parasite Simmias that he shall pretend to be the captain's servant sent to fetch the girl, Pseudolus taking the part of Ballio's Syrian steward. The plot succeeds, and Ballio loses the girl, but is afterwards recompensed by Simo, father of Calidorus. While all the play is good, the scene between Ballio and his household is perhaps Plautus' high water mark in realism.

The *Rudens*, the "Rope" or "Slip Knot", in spite of its poor title, is on the whole the most attractive of all the comedies. Adapted from *The Wallet* of Diphilus, it has a good plot, both romantic and comic interest, and abundant variety of characters. Of the female personages, Palæstra is a quite attractive heroine, her friend the lively Ampelisca is an admirable foil, and the old priestess Ptolemocratia is an amiable and dignified figure.

The hero Plesidippus is a trifle colourless; but that is a common weakness with heroes. The old gentleman Dæmones also has somewhat too much to say; but, as the part was plainly taken by the actor-manager, his rather undue importance is probably not altogether the author's blame. With the other characters no fault can be found: the three slaves, surly Sceparnio, pert Trachalio, and poor commonplace Gripus, are masterly studies; and the two companion rascals, Labrax and Charmides, Clown and Pantaloon, are among Plautus' richest inventions. Unlike most of the plays, the scene is laid not in a town but on the sea-shore, the morning after a storm, and all through there is a distinct feeling of the open air. The humour, too, is franker and less cynical than usual, and the long Prologue, spoken by Arcturus, is a really sound piece of practical moral teaching.

The *Stichus* is much the slightest of all the plays and is more like a "revue" than a comedy. The fifth act, where the title-character, the slave Stichus, makes his first appearance, has nothing to do with the rest of the action and is really a short sketch—"high life below stairs," with two men-servants and a maid as the only characters. Such plot as there is develops merely in the opening scenes. The two daughters of Antipho, Panegyris and Pamphila, who open the play with a very effective duet, are married to two brothers, who have been away in foreign parts for three years. Their father wishes them to marry again, but

as virtuous and faithful wives they refuse. Their husbands return with great possessions, and their constancy is justified. But after the first act the plot scarcely progresses, and, although the play is very short, it is rather tedious. There is one good character, the parasite Gelasimus, who introduces himself:

"I'm son of Starvation, and Famine's my nation;
I've always gone fasting from birth.
"Nothing fills up my belly, pies, puddings, or jelly;
I'm the hungriest fellow on earth."

The Ambrosian manuscript preserves for this piece a "didascalia", an original play-bill, "The *Stichus* of Titus Maccius Plautus from the Greek of Menander's *Brothers*, performed at the plebeian games. Cnæus Baebius and Caius Terentius being plebeian ædiles. Under the direction of Titus Publilius Pellio. Music for Sarranian flutes by Marcus, slave of Oppius. Caius Sulpicius and Caius Aurelius consuls."

The *Trinummus*, the "Bad Half-crown", is taken from the *Buried Treasure* of Philemon, and derives its title from a chance remark of a very minor character: "I will call to-day 'half a crown day', for that's what I have hired myself out at." It is not very amusing, but the plot is fairly interesting, and there is considerable skill shown in the delineation of character: Moreover, it has, for Plautus, the very great advantage of being perfectly unexceptionable in its moral tendency;

even the slave Stasimus is a model of fidelity instead of being, as usual, a model of craft. The piece opens with a prologue spoken by "Extravagance" and her daughter "Want", and the plot is briefly this:—Charmides, going abroad, has left a friend Callicles in charge of his property and his son Lesbonicus. The latter youth is a spendthrift, and Callicles is blamed by people for making a profit out of his trust. He explains to his neighbour the excellent Megaronides that he is really acting on the highest motives. and guarding a treasure which Callicles has concealed. Another worthy old gentleman, Philto, and his even more worthy son Lysiteles are also concerned in the action, the latter generously marrying the sister of Lesbonicus without a dowry. Finally, Charmides returns; and Lesbonicus reforms. The chief personages are the four old men and the two sons; as in the other edifying play, the *Captivi*, there are no women-characters.

The *Truculentus*, "Old Surly", takes its name from a quite minor character and is a very curious play. All the people in it are unpleasant, the plot is trivial and sordid, the writing is not particularly good. Yet the general effect is very striking, and Plautus himself is said to have held this, with the *Pseudolus*, to be his best piece. The main plot recalls the chief incident in Balzac's *Cousine Bette*. Phronesium—"Madame Artful"—a character drawn with the utmost mastery, has, like Madame Marneffe, three lovers—a captain, a country bumpkin, and a young

man about town. She regards them all with a cool indifference verging on actual dislike, and considers that they exist only to supply her with money. She has already ruined the young man Diniarchus, and is in process of extracting from the countryman Strabax all the money that he possesses. As for Captain Stratophanes, she pretends that she has borne him a child, and is continually demanding large sums from him for its maintenance. In reality, with the help of her maid-servant Astaphium, she has procured a child of which Diniarchus is the father by a girl whom he has seduced, and palms it off as her own. Even when Diniarchus is compelled at last to marry his victim, Phronesium retains possession of the infant, carries on her intrigue with Strabax and Stratophanes, and offers Diniarchus her hospitality again as soon as he shall grow tired of his wife.

The *Vidularia*, the "Wallet", was taken perhaps from *The Raft* of Diphilus, and its plot seems to have been something like that of the *Rudens*. A young man, Nicodemus, loses a ring whereby his identity can be established, and a fisherman finds it. But its merits as a play can hardly be estimated, for the Palatine manuscript ends abruptly with its title, and the hundred lines or so preserved in the Ambrosian palimpsest are not sufficient material for judgment.

This then is the Plautine theatre, a larger number of plays than remains of any ancient

dramatist, Euripides coming next with eighteen. That they are of very varying merit has already been granted, and a reader who began with the *Trinummus*, proceeded to the *Poenulus*, and ended with the *Mercator* would probably finish with a feeling of some disappointment. But in most of the plays our author's comic genius carries him triumphantly over the dullness and triviality of his Greek originals; and, taken all in all, there is no playwright in any language, save Aristophanes, who for sheer humour can be matched with him.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

*MANUSCRIPTS*

The Ambrosian palimpsest, a large parchment quarto of 251 pages, is the oldest Latin manuscript extant. Written originally in the third or fourth century of our era, it probably once formed part of the great collection at the monastery of Bobbio, established by the Irish monk Columban about A.D. 600. Some time in the eighth century the parchment was cleaned and scraped to have the Vulgate of the Second Book of Kings written on it, and, finding its way to the library at Milan, there remained undisturbed, until in 1815 Cardinal Mai discovered the existence of the original beneath the superimposed writing. The methods of cleaning which he employed obliterated many passages, and as we have it now the manuscript only gives us portions of fourteen plays.

A modern text of Plautus is the result of a collation of the Ambrosion A with the two manuscripts B and C, known as Palatine; the first *Vetus*, containing twenty plays, now in the Vatican Library, the second *Decurtatus*, with the last eight plays torn off, now at Heidelberg. Beside these two, and tracing eventually to the same archetype, are D, a manuscript in the Vatican containing only the last twelve plays, found in Germany about 1428 by Nicholas of Treves, and a large number of inferior manuscripts which include only the first eight plays.

*EDITIONS AND COMMENTARIES*

Editio Prima. Venice, 1472.
Camerarius. Bâle, 1552.
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Gronovius. Amsterdam, 1664 (the standard text before Ritschl).
Ritschl. Bonn, 1848–54 (the first edition in which the Ambrosian MS. was used : the foundation for all later work).
Fleckeisen. Leipzig, 1850.
Ussing. Copenhagen, 1875.
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Goetz and Schoell. Leipzig, 1904.

The best editions with English commentary of separate plays are Palmer's *Amphitryon*, Wagner's *Aulularia*, Lindsay's *Captivi*, Tyrrel's *Miles Gloriosus*, and Sonnenschein's *Rudens*.

The most complete accounts of Plautus as a writer are Reinhardstöttner, *Bearbeitungen Plautinische, Lustspiele*, Leipzig, 1886; Leo, *Plautinische Forschungen*, Berlin, 1912; Fraenkel, *Plautinisches im Plautus*, Berlin, 1922; G. Michaut, *Plaute*, Paris, 1921.

*ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS*

No translation of Plautus was published in England during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, except a version of the *Menaechmi*

by William Warner, printed 1595, which Shakespeare may have seen in manuscript.

In the eighteenth century there was a slight improvement : and a translation of all the comedies by Bonnell Thornton, G. Colman, and R. Warner appeared 1769. It is in " familiar blank verse " and is not good.

In the first half of the nineteenth century there were only one or two poor attempts in prose : more recently we have had a version by E. H. Sugden (1893) of the first five plays " in the original metres ", and a translation in blank verse by Sir R. Allison (1914) of the *Anlularia*, *Captivi*, *Menaechmi*, *Amphitryon*, and *Rudens*. A few single plays have also been separately translated, the most notable being the *Menaechmi* by B. B. Rogers, published with the sixth volume of his Aristophanes. Of the Loeb Library Plautus, Leo's text and translation by P. Nixon, two volumes containing the first ten plays, have been issued. Mr. Nixon is handicapped by using the prose form, but he gets much nearer the real spirit of Plautus than any of his predecessors.

# THE SLIP-KNOT

(RUDENS)

*A ROMANTIC COMEDY IN VERSE*

translated by

F. A. WRIGHT

## PREFACE

The *Slip-Knot* is a close translation of Plautus' *Rudens*, itself a free adaptation of a lost Greek original by Diphilus, first performed in Rome 192 B.C. In the actual conditions of its representation with songs and music a Plautine comedy had more resemblance to *The Beggar's Opera* or *The Gondoliers* than to *The Way of the World* or *The School for Scandal*, and I have tried to make this fact somewhat more evident than has been done by previous translators. My version is fairly faithful, I hope: only three lines have been omitted containing a joke unsuitable for an English audience; and, although I have slipped in some words and phrases of my own—for otherwise a translator's task is apt to be tedious—I believe that the kindly shade of Plautus in the Elysian fields will forgive me for them.

## Characters of the Play

Arcturus, A Star Performer, speaks the Prologue.

Sceparnio, "Tom Adze," a choleric old servant.

Plesidippus, "Young Scattercash," a man about town.

Daemones, "Squire Steadfast," an honest worthy gentleman.

Palaestra, "Jenny Trainem" } two young ladies
Ampelisca, "Polly Vine" } of pleasure.

Ptolemocratia, "Dame Stately," priestess of Venus.

Two Poor Fishermen.

Trachalio, "Pert," a nimble valet.

Labrax, "Grab all," a rascally pimp.

Charmides, "Joyson," his friend.

Turbalio, "Tearem" }
Sparax, "Smasher" } experts at the bastinado.

Gripus, "Jim Creel," a fisherman in Daemones' service.

Three Friends of Plesidippus.

*The action of the play takes place on the seashore, outside Daemones' house, next door to the temple of Venus, not far from Cyrene.*

## THE SLIP-KNOT

ARCTURUS comes forward and speaks the PROLOGUE

*Being a divine personage, he is dressed in shining robes, and carries a bright gleaming wand*

Behold me here a bright far-gleaming sign,
The fellow-countryman of Jove divine,
Who moves all people on the sea and land.
At my due time I in the heaven stand
As on this stage, and, if you ask my name,
Arcturus am I, not unknown to fame.
At night I light the firmament, and then
In day-time take my walks among you men
As do the other stars ; for mighty Jove
Sends us our ways about his earth to rove,
To see your doings and to bring reward
To those who faith and true religion guard.
Those who deny deposits they have ta'en
And by false witness seek unlawful gain,
Their names we take and write them in our book
That Jove may know who here for trouble look.
Base, perjured folk who in the law-courts strive
That from their lies they profit may derive
Find that their case is tried again in heaven,
And pay far more than what on earth was given.
Good men we write upon another roll,

For him to read who doth this world control.
And yet rogues fancy Jove forgives men's vice
If they but make him gifts of sacrifice.
They waste their trouble: God will ne'er accept
From perjurers atonement for their debt.
Only the good man, if he asks for grace,
Will find forgiveness at God's judgment-place.
Wherefore I bid you all, of virtue's kind,
Still honest stay, and so salvation find.

Now for our plot, since that is why I've come:
Yon town's Cyrene and this house the home
Of Daemones, who once from Athens went,
And on this sea-shore dwells in banishment,
An honest gentleman whose only crime
Was that he could not thrifty be in time:
He helped his neighbours to his own sore cost,
And well-gained wealth by too great kindness lost.
An only child he had; but she one day
Was kidnapped by a cruel thief away.
He sold her to the pimp his slave to be,
Who brought her here from Athens o'er the sea.
Young Plesidippus chanced the maid to meet
As from her school she tripped along the street
—He, too, from Athens comes—and straightway fell
Enamoured, and besought the pimp to sell
His charmer to him; then, lest oaths should fail,
Paid him a hundred down to clench the sale.
The pimp recked naught of oaths, like all his kind,

Just took the money—and then changed his mind!
He has a friend, a rascal sly and old,
Who did betray his native land for gold.
From Sicily, of Agrigentum town
"This girl," quoth he, "when she is woman grown
Will be the cynosure of all men's eyes.
Take her to Sicily; she'll be a prize
For the biggest bidder; put the tariff high:
Men in my country love a luxury.
Bring her and all your other damsels there
And soon, my lad, you'll be a millionaire."
The pimp agreed and slyly filled a ship
With all his goods, and off prepared to slip.
He told the lover who had bought the maid
A vow to Venus by him must be paid—
Here's Venus' shrine—and said: "I you invite
To feast with me to-morrow." Then, last night,
He goes on board, and takes the girls away.
The young man learnt the trick without delay,
And hurries to the harbour, where he's shown
The ship departed and the pander flown.
Then 'twas my turn: when I the maiden spied
Thus carried off, I hastened to her side
With help, and to the pimp destruction gave
With roaring blast and fiercely tossing wave.
For of all stars I am the mightiest yet,
Fierce when I rise, and fiercer when I set.
Now on a rock they're sitting side by side
That precious pair, and deep beneath the tide
Their ship lies shattered, while the maids in fear

Are being carried in a cock-boat here,
Close to the old man's house whose roof last night
Was by the stormy wind uncovered quite.
Here comes his servant out, and soon you'll see
Young Plesidippus with his company.
That is the plot, and now my part is played:
Good-bye—and may your foes be still dismayed.
(*Exit*)

## ACT I

### Scene I

*The sea-shore. Morning after a storm. A three-quarter gale has been blowing all night; the waves are breaking furiously on the rocks, and the beach is strewn with flotsam and jetsam. The door of* Daemones' *house opens, and Sceparnio, his old servant, appears. Stepping forward, he looks with dismay at the thatched roof, in which ugly gaps have been made by the fury of the tempest, and soliloquizes.*

Sceparnio :

Ye gods in heaven what a sight!
O, what a storm we've had this night!
'Twas like Alcmena in the play;
Look how it's swept our thatch away!
We shan't want any windows now,
We have got holes enough, I trow.

*Grumbling, and with much shaking of head, he prepares materials to mend the roof. While he is thus engaged, four young men enter by the road that leads from the neighbouring town of Cyrene. They are fashionably dressed in high boots and riding cloaks, and have plainly made the journey in hot haste.*

## Scene II

Plesidippus (*addressing his friends*) :

I brought you from your business, friends,
Though on our toil no luck attends ;
The pimp has slipped his cable.
But yet I will not quite despair,
Nor sitting idly beat the air ;
To catch him still we're able.
Before us, see, is Venus' shrine,
Where he invited me to dine
This morning at his table.

Sceparino (*ostentatiously disregarding the newcomers*)
I'd better mix this cursèd mortar.

Ples. (*suddenly aware of his presence*) : Oh,
Some one is speaking here.

Daemones (*appearing in the doorway*) : Sceparnio.

Scep. (*bending over his work*) : Who calls ?

Daem. : The man who for you money gave.

Scep. :
You mean, Sir Daemones, that I'm your slave.

Daem. :
Come, get to work ! we want a lot of stuff ;
That heap of mortar scarce will be enough.
We have our work this plaguey roof to patch ;
It's riddled like a sieve—more holes than thatch.

Ples. (*coming forward and addressing* Daemones) :
Father, good-day.

Daem. : Good-day to you, young friend !

SCEP. (*interrupting in surly tone*) :
Pray are you man or woman that you send
This greeting to my master ?

PLES. (*surprised*) : I'm a man.

SCEP. :
Then find another father, if you can.

DAEM. (*mildly apologetic*) :
One only child, a girl, to me was given,
And her I lost, by the decree of heaven.
I never had a son.

PLES. : You still may hope ;
The gods will send one.

SCEP. (*in indignant aside*) : May they send a rope
To hang this prating knave ! We've work on hand,
And have no time in gossiping to stand.

PLES. :
Do you live here ?

SCEP. : What's that to you, sir, pray ?
Or have you come a burgling this way ?

PLES. :
A slave must honest be, and rich withal,
Who in his master's presence dares to brawl
Thus against gentlefolk.

SCEP. : And he must be
A scurvy rascal, and from all shame free,
Who to a stranger's dwelling dares to go
And thus annoy.

DAEM. : Enough, Sceparnio.
What do you want, young sir ?

PLES. (*pointing to Sceparnio*) : For him the whip
Who in his master's presence gives me lip.
But there are some things that I fain would know
From you, sir, if you will.

DAEM. : I'm busy now.
Yet all I can I'll tell.

SCEP. (*reprovingly to his master*) : Nay, you had better
Cut some reed-thatch before our roof gets wetter.

DAEM. :
You, hold your tongue : and you, sir, speak, I crave.

PLES. :
Pray, have you seen a curly grey-haired knave,
A roguish cheat ?

DAEM. : Why, yes ; I've seen a lot.
It is through them my troubles I have got.

PLES. :
Sir, you mistake my meaning, as I fear.
Have you seen such a rascal lately here ?
Two girls were with him, and he made pretence
He would to Venus pay due reverence.

DAEM. :
No, no ! For many a day no one has been
A-sacrificing here. I should have seen
Them, if they had. I know it to my sorrow ;
There's always something that they want to borrow—

Water, a pot, a dish, a spit, or fire—
Never an end to what such folk require.
My well, my kitchen, all I have, in fine,
Is held in service to Dame Venus' shrine.
But for some days from callers we've been free.

PLES. :
That means I'm lost.

DAEM. : Nay, if it rests with me,
You're here quite safe.

SCEP. (*interrupting*) : He may be safe, but still
He need not hope his belly here to fill.

DAEM. :
May I suppose that you had an invite
To luncheon here that you are in this plight,
And, after being forced for miles to go,
Your host has not arrived ?

PLES. : Exactly so.
The rogue has played on me a dirty trick.

SCEP. (*again breaking in*) :
Well, my young friend, you'd better get home quick.
You see it's off, your looked-for temple lunch :
You must at home to-day your victuals munch.
Let Venus be, and Ceres choose instead ;
One's queen of love, the other gives us bread.

DAEM. (*who somewhat annoyed at his servant's surly language has moved away and suddenly sees two men in the distance struggling among the breakers*) :
Good heavens ! What is that along the shore ? I see two men.

SCEP. : Ah yes, they are two more
Come here to lunch.

DAEM. : Why so ?

SCEP. : Since their last dinner
They've had a right good wash, or I'm a sinner.

DAEM. : It is a shipwreck—don't you understand ?

SCEP. : Well, we have got a roof wreck here on land.

DAEM. : Poor folk ! Look how they struggle ! What a sight !

PLES. : Where are they, pray ?

DAEM. : Just there, along the right.

PLES. (*to his friends*) :
Come, friends : one of them may be that bad hat We want. Good-bye, sir.

SCEP. (*determined to have the last word*) : We will see to that.

*Turning his back upon them, he proceeds with his work ; but presently, looking in the other direction, gives a loud cry.*

Great gods alive, what's that I see?
Two damsels in a boat!
Dear Saint Palaemon, gracious be!
They scarce can keep afloat.
O what a monstrous swelling wave:
Well will they do their lives to save.

Bravo! they're driving to the shore,
They're past the fatal rock;
A pilot could not have done more.
Oh, that's a nasty shock!
One's overboard, oh dear, oh dear,
But still it's shallow water there.

Hurrah, she's up: hurrah, she's out—
And so's the other too.
No! on her knees she falls in doubt—
Ah, now she's wading through!
Take care! take care!—don't go that way,
Or else your journey's done to-day.

DAEM.:

Why are you so concerned, my friend?

SCEP.:

If she should strike that stone
Her travels would be at an end,
And all her troubles done.
Keep to the left, and then you'll be
Right quickly in security.

DAEM. :
If they supplied you with your drink,
I'ld grant that you were right
To be so anxious—but I think
You sup with me to-night ?
He has first claim with whom you feed.

SCEP. : 'Tis only just, sir ; that's agreed.

*They go off together to cut reeds in the marshes.*

## SCENE III

*The stage is for some moments empty. Presently the sound of weak, faltering footsteps is heard, and* PALAESTRA *is seen approaching along the shore. She is dressed elaborately as befits her profession ; but her fine clothes are much damaged by sea-water, and she is cold, wet, and miserable. Sinking down upon the sand, she murmurs to herself, and then begins a lamentable song.*

PALAESTRA :
Oft men talk of Fate unkind,
Call her cruel, void of ruth :
By experience they find
That no words can match the truth.

Ye gods above, what have I done
That I should be so sore distrest—
A shipwrecked maiden left alone,
Who know not where my head to rest ?
Was it for this that I was born ?
Is virtue's prize to be forlorn ?

If I, or those who me begot,
Had sinned against your power divine,
I would not murmur at my lot,
Nor at this unjust fate repine.
But we your faith did ever guard;
And this, O gods, is my reward!

It is my wicked master's sin
Has brought me to this direful pass;
The ship that bore his goods within
Is wrecked, and with it all he has.
I, only I, alone remain,
Nor could my one dear friend retain.

If she were here, I should not be
So altogether desolate.
What hope, what help is there for me,
What can I do against my fate?
Here are but rocks and breakers rude:
All else is dreary solitude.

These clothes are all that I possess;
I know not where I food may find;
Abandoned in this wilderness
Hopeless and sore distrest in mind.
No sign of men I've seen to-day.
No one to guide me on my way.

Freeborn, I live a wretched slave.
Alas! my parents do not know
The hapless fortune that I have,
And the sad griefs that vex me now.
They brought me forth and thought it gain.
But all their labour was in vain.

## Scene IV

*While* Palaestra *is lying exhausted on the beach,* Ampelisca, *also dripping wet and worn out with fatigue, appears clambering over the rocks that fringe one side of the bay. She is visible to the spectators but cannot be seen by* Palaestra, *who is lying at the foot of the rocks.*

Ampelisca :

There is nothing, I see, that is better for me
than to just put an end to existing ;
For my life is a curse and it could not be
worse, and my troubles are always persisting.
I don't care a jot if I give up the lot, for
I am completely despited :
I can't find my friend, though I've tried without end
with eyes, ears, and voice all united.
There is not a soul here ; it's a desert, I fear ;
not a person to tell me about her.
But if she's alive, I will not cease to strive ;
for I really cannot live without her.

Palaestra (*starting up from the sand as she hears* Ampelisca's *voice*) :

What is this sound that floats about me ?

Amp. (*stopping in sudden fear*) :

Who is it speaks ? I shrink in dread.

Pal. :

Help me, kind Hope, and do not flout me.

AMP. :
Oh, who will save my shrinking head !
(*Partly recovering from her fright, she advances slowly towards the beach.*)

PAL. :
I'm sure it is a woman's voice I hear.

AMP. :
It is a woman's voice that strikes my ear.

PAL. :
Dear Ampelisca, is it you, I pray.

AMP. :
Is it Palaestra's voice that comes this way ?

PAL. :
I'd better call her. Ampelisca, hi !

AMP. : Who is it calling ?

PAL. : 'Tis Palaestra—I.

AMP. : Where are you ?

PAL. : Truly I'm in sore distress.

AMP. : I'm with you there, for I'm in grief no less.
But oh, I want to see you !

PAL. : I as well !

AMP. : Let's call then, and our voice the way will tell.
Where are you ?

PAL. : Here ! Come this way, and we'll meet.

AMP. : I'll do my best.

PAL. : Give me your hand, my sweet.

AMP. : Take it, my dear one.

PAL. : Oh, I thought you dead !

AMP. : I wished I was ; but now I live instead.
Scarce can I think I hold you in my arms ;
Come, kiss me, sweet, and comfort my alarms.

PAL. :
You say before me what I fain would say.
But we had better get upon our way.

AMP. :
Where shall we go ?

PAL. : This way.

AMP. : Where'er you please.
But can we walk along in clothes like these
All dripping wet ?

PAL. : My dear, what can't be cured,
You know the proverb says must be endured.
(*For the first time seeing the temple.*)
But what is this that meets my wondering sight ?
It is a temple.

AMP. : Where ?

PAL. : Upon your right.

AMP. : Fit for the gods to grace it doth appear.

PAL. : A place so charming means that men live near.

*Falling upon her knees before the temple door, she prays :—*

We pray thee, God, where'er thou be :
Aid us poor maidens in distress,
From all our troubles set us free,
And help our loneliness.

## Scene V

*The door of the temple opens, and Ptolemocratia, priestess of Venus, a grave elderly woman, appears.*

Ptolemocratia :

The voice of prayer hath brought me from the shrine,
Who are these that invoke our queen divine ?
In her a gracious patron they shall know,
Who ever does abiding kindness show.

Palaestra :

Greeting, O mother !

Ptol. : Greeting, girls, to you !
But from what place so sorrowful to view
In dripping garments come ye ?

Pal. : 'Tis quite near
The place we now have come from ; but I fear
Our native land is very far away.

Ptol. :

Upon a steed of timber I should say
You rode the dark blue paths. Is it not so ?

Pal. : Exactly.

PTOL. : Well, you should have come, you know,
In white apparel with an offering.
Your dress is not at all the proper thing.

PAL. :
How would you have us victims bring, when we
Have just been shipwrecked on the stormy sea ?
(*Falling down before her.*)
Nay, on our knees we supplicate your aid,
Helpless and homeless, strangers, sore afraid.
All that we have you see. O, shelter give.
And of your grace let us poor creatures live.

PTOL. :
Rise, hapless maidens, rise : here is my hand !
No softer heart than mine in all the land.
But you must know that there is no great gain
For priests of Venus here. I scarce maintain
Myself in poverty, and serving God
Have much ado to get my daily food.

PAL. : Is this the shrine of Venus ?

PTOL. : Yes, and I
Am called her priestess. All I can supply
Is freely yours. Come in, and we will see
If we can find a meal for you and me.

PAL. : We thank you, mother, for this generous aid.

PTOL. : It is my duty ; no more need be said.

*Accompanied by the two girls, she goes into the temple and the door closes.*

END OF ACT I

## ACT II

### Scene I

Two Fishermen *are seen coming down the road from Cyrene to the shore. Coils of fishing-line hang from their arms, and they carry long bamboo rods with tufts of leaves at the end to serve as bait. Seeing the waves still breaking furiously against the rocks, they halt upon the beach.*

The Fishermen :

By our dress pretty well
Our rank you can tell,
With our hooks and our rods for a load, sirs ;
Every day from the town
Browsing here we come down—
These give us our clothes and our food, sirs.
For, when you are poor
And Want's at the door,
Anything in the larder seems good, sirs.

No money we've made,
And we have not a trade,
So the sea is our school and our play, sirs.
Limpets, whelks in their shell,
Mussels, oysters as well,
Sea-nettles—we seek them all day, sirs.
We fish with a hook,
And among the rocks look—
All is fodder that comes in our way, sirs.

But, if our luck's out
And there's nothing about,
Then with bellies as flat as a lath, sirs,
We slink home to bed
And we cover our head
If we meet anyone in our path, sirs.
But, though we've no fish
To put on our dish,
We've had a nice salt-water bath, sirs.

First Fisherman :

With this rough sea there's little hope I fear
Of doing any good a-fishing here.

Second Fisherman :

Perhaps upon some scallops we may light,
Or else we must go supperless to-night.

First Fisherman :

Come ! let us pray to Venus. She will hear us,
And of her grace some succour send to cheer us.

*They kneel before the little altar that stands outside the temple-door.*

## Scene II

Trachalio, *valet to* Plesidippus, *a dapper young man and sufficiently well pleased with himself, comes bustling in* :

When my young master to the harbour went
He bade me meet him. To this shrine he meant
That I should come ; but sorely I forebode
For all my care I've passed him on the road
Ah ! here are people handy to inquire.
They'll tell me surely all that I desire.

*Addressing the fishermen with condescending humour.*

Good day, you sea-thieves, Masters Hook and Shell :
How goes it, gripe-guts ? Are you starving well ?

A Fisherman :

We live like fishers always do, I think.
Vain hopes for us take place of food and drink.

Trachalio :

Pray have you seen while waiting here about
A red-cheeked youth, firm-looking, strong and stout,
And three young gallants with him, cloaked, with swords ?

Fisherman :

No one we've seen who answers to your words.

Trach. :

Have you an old bald-headed fellow met,
Pot-bellied like a satyr, and thick set,
With beetling eyebrows and a nasty frown,
Whom neither gods nor yet mankind would own—
A solid mass of wickedness and vice ?
Two girls were with him—young, and rather nice.

FISHERMAN :
A man endowed with all the arts you say
Should not to Venus come. His proper way
Is to the pillory.

TRACH. : Well, have you seen
A fellow like him, pray.

FISHERMAN : No one has been
Of his sort here. Good-bye, young sir !

(*They go off down the shore.*)

TRACH. : Good-bye !
I thought as much : now it's a certainty :
The pimp has tricked us. He away has gone
To foreign parts, and my poor master's done.
This luncheon was but meant a bait to be ;
He and the girls have sailed across the sea.
Sure I'm a prophet. Still I'd better wait
And meet my master at the temple gate.
The priestess, too, may tell me more, I trow.
I'll ask her if I see her. She will know.

## SCENE III

AMPELISCA *comes out from the temple carrying a water-jar and speaking to the priestess within.*

I see : this house next door : it's here you said
I was to knock, and not to be afraid
To ask for water.

TRACHALIO (*turning at the sound of her voice*):
What is that I hear?

AMPELISCA: Who speaks?

TRACH.: Why, who is this I see appear?
Is it my Ampelisca that I see?

AMP.:
Is it Trachalio? O, can it be?

TRACH.: 'Tis she!

AMP.: 'Tis he! Trachalio, good day!

TRACH.:
Good day, my Ampelisca. Tell me, pray,
How goes it?

AMP.: Badly, though I may look well.

TRACH.:
I wish you had some better news to tell.

AMP.:
Wise folk have no desire the truth to hide.
But where's your master?

TRACH. (*pointing to the temple*):
Sure, he's there inside.

AMP.:
He has not come, nor any other men.

TRACH.: Not come?

AMP.: That's true.

TRACH.: It is not like me then.
How soon will lunch be ready?

AMP.: Luncheon here?

TRACH.: Yes, in the temple.

AMP.: You're asleep, my dear.

TRACH.:
Well, I am sure your master did invite
My master to come here the other night.

AMP.:
I should not wonder. Pimps are all the same.
To cheat both gods and men's their favourite game.

TRACH.:
He must be at the sacrifice; that's flat.

AMP.: You're dreaming still.

TRACH.: Well, tell me what you're at.

AMP. (*with gusto*):
After much grief and trouble we were left
In mortal danger—of all hope bereft,
Until at last a refuge on firm ground
I and Palaestra with the priestess found.

TRACH.:
What, is my master's lady here as well?

AMP.: Yes.

TRACH.: 'Tis indeed a welcome tale you tell.
But mortal danger how could you expect?

AMP.:
Our ship last night was by the tempest wrecked.

TRACH.:
"Ship," say you? What's that tale?

AMP.: Why, don't you know?
The pimp arranged by stealth that we should go
To Sicily. His goods on ship he got.
A storm came on. And now he's lost the lot.

TRACH.:
Bravo, Sir Neptune! 'Twas well played again.
No one can beat you when you throw a main.
You've tricked that perjured trickster now, I think.
Where is your master?

AMP.: Oh, he's died of drink.
Neptune last night invited him to sup:
He had to lap a lot of liquor up.

TRACH.:
Good! Ampelisca, you're a little dear:
Your words are sweet as honey to my ear.
But, tell me, how did you escape alive?

AMP.:
When our ship toward the rocks began to drive
We leapt into a skiff and cut the rope—
The men in their dismay had lost all hope.
The tempest swept our cock-boat to the right
Away from danger, and for all the night.
Tossed by the winds and waves in dire distress

We bore the burden of our wretchedness.
And so at last when we could scarce bear more
The fierce wind cast us on this lonely shore.

*Her voice breaks.*

TRACH. (*trying to comfort her with a poor joke*):
I know! that's Neptune's way—he's very dainty.
If he finds meat that is a trifle tainty
He casts it out.

AMP.: (*smiling*): You'll pay me, sir, for this.

TRACH.: And you will pay me back again, young miss.
I knew the pimp would play the trick he has.
I warned my master what a rogue he was.
I'll let my hair grow long, and start as prophet.

AMP. (*dryly*):
You might have stopped his game, if you knew of it.

TRACH.: What could my master do?

AMP.: "What do"? you say.
A proper lover would have watched all day
And every night. But he—like all you men—
When care was wanted was most careless then.

TRACH.: How so?

AMP.: 'Tis plain.

TRACH.: Well, at the baths, you know,
Your clothes get filched, and you don't see them go,

However much you watch them ; for the throng
Deceives the man to whom the clothes belong.
Who means to thieve the owner cannot tell.
The thief, he knows the owner all too well.
But where's Palaestra ?

AMP. : In the temple near
You'll find her crying bitterly.

TRACH. : Oh, dear !
What is she crying for ?

AMP. : She's very sad.
There was a little casket that she had
Which might have traced her parents. It appears
Our master took it : now it's lost, she fears.

TRACH. : Where was the casket ?

AMP. : 'Twas with us on board
Within the wallet where he keeps his hoard.
He took it from her that she might not find
Her parents ever.

TRACH. : What a shameless mind !
To keep a girl who really should be free
And want to hold her still in slavery.

AMP. :
Of course the wallet with our ship has gone
To Davy Jones's locker.

TRACH. : Nay, some one
Perhaps has dived and brought it up again.

AMP. :
That is the reason of her present pain—
To think she's lost them.

TRACH. : The more need, I guess,
To go and comfort her in her distress.
People with luck unhoped for often meet.

AMP. :
Yes, and they often find that Hope's a cheat.

TRACH. :
Courage in trouble's the best sauce to try.
If you don't mind I'll go.

AMP. : All right ; and I
Will fetch the water as the priestess bade.
" Ask in my name : they'll give it you," she said.

TRACHALIO *goes into the temple.* AMPELISCA *before knocking at* DAEMONES' *door indulges in a soliloquy.*

A nicer old lady I never have met,
Or one who deserves more good fortune to get.
Two poor timid girls, weary, shipwrecked, and worn,
She welcomed us kindly, as if we'd been born
Her own daughters. She gave us all we could desire
And put a big pot for our bath on the fire.
As she's been so busy, I must not delay.
I'll get her the water. She told me the way.

*Going to the door she knocks several times.*

Is there any one in? Is no one at home?
I'm knocking my hardest. Please somebody come!

## Scene IV

*At the noise of* Ampelisca's *repeated knocking* Sceparnio *at last opens the door.*

Sceparnio:
Who is the saucy knave that knocks like this.

Ampelisca (*with a curtsey*):
'Tis I.

Scep.: Aha! a very dainty miss!

Amp.: Good day, young cock!

Scep.: Good day, my little hen!

Amp.: I've—

Scep. (*interrupting*): Come to-night. You will be welcome then.
Girls in the morning don't with me agree.
What do you say to that, my chick-a-dee?

Amp.:
I say that you have too familiar grown.

Scep.:
Good lord! It might be Venus' self come down.
O what a merry eye, and what a skin!
A bruinette—brunette, of course I mean.
How firm her breasts! her mouth, how sweet it pouts!

AMP. :
Hands off! I am not meat for country louts.

SCEP. :
Surely it is no crime in days like these
To give a pretty girl a pretty squeeze.

AMP. :
Another time perhaps, when I have leisure,
I'll let you do it, if it gives you pleasure.
But now for business. Please say " yes " or " no "
To my request.

SCEP. : What would you have me do.

AMP. (*holding out her urn*) :
By what I've here a man of sense would see
My wants.

SCEP. (*with a coarse gesture*) : A girl would see the same with me.

AMP. :
The priestess said : " Go ask for water there."

SCEP. :
Monarchs like me must be approached with prayer.
We dug this well, and worked with might and main.
Coax me, if you would water now obtain.

AMP. :
Why grudge me that which foes to foemen offer ?

SCEP. :
And why grudge me what friends to friends do
proffer ?

AMP. :
My pet, I'll do your pleasure bye and bye.

SCEP. :
She calls me " pet " ! I've won the victory.
Give me your urn and take at once your price.

AMP. : Here.

SCEP. : Wait a bit. I'll be back in a trice.
(*He hurries off with the urn to the well.*)

AMP. :
What pretext, to the priestess shall I make
For my delay ? Oh dear ! I'm all a-shake.
Those raging billows are too much for me—
But who are these along the shore I see
Approaching hither, round the nearest bend ?
Oh ! it's my master and his foreign friend !
I hoped the sea to them an end had brought.
There's more of mischief living than we thought.
I'd better quickly to the temple fly
And tell Palaestra, so that we may hie
For refuge to the altar. If I stay.
The pimp will come and seize us as his prey.
I've got no time to linger. Off I go,
For that I think's the best thing I can do.

## Scene V

Sceparnio (*returns with the urn full of water*):

Ye gods above, I never dreamed
I should be pleased an urn to fill!
Our well the merest trifle seemed.
I know I should not boast. But still!
Just fancy, at my time of life!
Here I am thinking of a wife!

(*Looking about for* Ampelisca.)

You pretty duck: your urn is here—
I'll teach you now the proper way
To carry it; like this, my dear.
Where are you, naughty darling, pray?
Ah, she's in love with me as well:
The rogue is hiding, I can tell.

(*With growing uneasiness.*)

Where are you? Come: your water take!
This joke is very funny: yet
'Tis time it should an ending make.
Where are you? I shall angry get.
Oh dear, oh dear! I cannot see
Her anywhere. She's mocking me.

I'll throw it in the road and go.
But then suppose some robber stole
This temple urn—No, that won't do.
She's put me in a nasty hole.
For should the jar be found on me
I should be up the apple-tree.

If a policeman saw me now,
Excuses were of no avail.
These letters plain its owner show :
I might expect a month in jail.
I'd better to the priestess call
To take the thing, ere worse befall.

(*Goes to the temple door and knocks.*)

Here, madam priestess, take your urn :
A naughty baggage brought it out ;
I thought that for it she'd return.
No answer ? Is no one about ?
Things to a pretty pass have come :
I'll have to cart their water home.

*He takes up the heavy urn, and reluctantly carries it inside.*

## Scene VI

Labrax, *the pimp, appears walking quickly along the beach, followed at a slower pace by his old friend* Charmides. *They are in lamentable case—hungry, wet, and very cold : they have with difficulty escaped from the shipwreck, and having lost all their money, they are in very bad temper.*

Labrax :

If a man wants a beggar soon to be,
Let him trust Neptune with his property.
Should any one to him on business come,
This is the way he sends him limping home.

By Jove, Miss Freedom, is a clever lass;
She never would with me on shipboard pass;
She much preferred dry land. But where's my friend,
Who brought me to this lamentable end?
Ah, here he comes—

CHARMIDES: Is this a bally race?
I can't keep up with you at such a pace.

LABR.:
I wish that they had hung you on a cross
Before I ever saw you. All this loss
Is due to you.

CHARM.: I wish upon the day
When first I crossed your threshold you had lay
In prison sick: and now I pray to heaven
That guests like you to you be always given.

LABR.:
In you Bad Luck in person did I bring
To my poor house. It was a fatal thing
To listen to a scurvy cheating knave
And leave my home to sail the ocean wave.
I've lost more money than I ever got.

CHARM.:
I'm not surprised our ship has gone to pot—
It carried you and your ill-gotten gold.

LABR.:
I have been ruined by the lies you told.

CHARM. :

The meat that Terens and Thyestes ate
Compared with yours was pure and delicate.

*The mention of meat brings upon the unfortunate* LABRAX *a return of squeamishness, and he is violently sick. He cries pitifully to his friend.*

LABR. :

I'm feeling bad—too much I've had : dear comrade, hold my head.

CHARM. :

Cough your lungs up, you silly tup : I wish that you were dead.

LABR. :

O, where are you, my pretty two, my darling pair of girls ?

CHARM. :

I think the fish have made a dish of those two precious pearls.

LABR. : I trusted all your stories tall : a beggar I shall be.

(*He weeps copiously.*)

CHARM. : I've turned a fool into a pool : say " Thank you, sir," to me.

LABR. :

Oh, go to hell ! I know full well that there you'll make an end.

CHARM. :
And that is where I sadly fear you'll find yourself, my friend.

LABR. :
Oh dear, oh dear! Is any here more miserable than I?

CHARM. :
Why yes, good lord; the fates afford to me more misery.

LABR. : Pray tell me how.

CHARM. : You must allow that here I'm not concerned
While I will bet that all you get you thoroughly have earned.

*Their slanging-match is now at end, and, sitting on adjacent rocks, they survey each other malignantly.*

LABR. :
O bulrush, bulrush! you must happy be
Who stand in water but from damp are free.

CHARM. :
I as a scout my cleverness might prove
For every part of me is on the move.

LABR. :
Neptune for me his bath too cold did make
I've got my clothes on but I'm all a-shake.

CHARM. :
It isn't hot drink in his shop that's sold :
His tipple's briny, and most plaguy cold.

LABR. :
Blacksmiths indeed are happy, happy folk,
All nice and warm beside their red-hot coke.

CHARM. :
O, little ducks, I wish that you were I—
Then I might swim about and still be dry.

LABR. :
My teeth go chitter-chatter. Now's your time,
Hire me as ogre for a pantomime.

CHARM. :
I'm quite cleaned out. But still it was my due.

LABR. :
How's that ?

CHARM. : Because I dared to sail with you.
You stirred the sea up from its depths beneath.

LABR. :
Why did I ever listen to you ? 'Sdeath !
You said that over there young wenches gain
Big money and that I should soon obtain
Enough to make a very pretty pile.

CHARM. :
What ! Did you really think, you monster vile,
To get all Sicily within your maw.

LABR. :

What whale or shark, I wonder, down his jaw
Has gulped the little wallet that did hold
All I possess of silver and of gold ?

CHARM. :

The same, methinks, that had the purse to-day
Which was in my portmanteau stored away.

LABR. :

Well, I'm reduced to one poor shirt and vest :
It is'nt much, but I have lost the rest.

CHARM. :

Let's pool our clothes and have an equal share.

LABR. :

If my two girls were safe, I should not care :
But if young Plesidippus finds me thus,
He'll be inclined to make a nasty fuss.
On my Palaestra he has got a lien.

CHARM. :

You silly cuckoo ! If he should begin
To claim his money, bring your tongue in play
And by its help your debts you soon will pay.

## SCENE VII

SCEPARNIO (*comes out from the temple in a state, for him, of some perturbation*) :

Why is it those two are in such an ado, with
their arms round the goddess tight thrown !
Pretty dears, they're in dread of some rascal,
they said, and so here for refuge have flown.

They are in a sad plight: they told me last night they were shipwrecked and very near drowned.

LABRAX (*hearing these words, pricks up his ears*):
Pray tell me, young sir, where may I infer that these ladies are now to be found?

SCEP.:
In the temple just here.

LABR.: How many are there?

SCEP.:
Just as many as you and I make.

LABR.: They really are mine.

SCEP.: I must really decline your word unsupported to take.

LABR.:
Please answer again—are they pretty or plain?

SCEP.:
They are both jolly pretty. Gee whiz!
For myself I could do very well with the two —if I'd had a few bottles of fizz.

LABR.:
They are girls, you are sure?

SCEP.: I am sure you're a bore: if you like you may go in and view them.

LABR. (*to* CHARMIDES) :

Do you hear that, my friend ? My woe's at an end : they are here, there's no need to pursue them.

CHARMIDES :

If they are or are not, I don't care a jot ; but I hope that your end may be evil.

LABR. :

It's a temple, I know, but I'll break my way through.

CHARM. :

I wish you would go to the devil.

LABRAX, *finding him so unsympathetic, pulls violently at the temple door, forces the fastening, and makes his way in.*

CHARM. (*in a wheedling voice to* SCEPARNIO, *who surveys him with distaste*) :

Tell me, stranger, is there any shelter here where I can lie ?

SCEP. (*pointing to the beach*) :

You may lie just where you fancy. This is common property.

CHARM. :

But you see my dripping garments and their very woeful plight.

Shelter me while they are drying ; give me cover for the night.

I'll repay you soon or later.

SCEP.: Here's a sack; it's all I've got.
When it rains it's my umbrella and my vest when it is not.
Give me your wet clothes: I'll dry them—

CHARM.: Really, sir, I must complain,
I have been cleaned out on shipboard; you would clean me out again.

SCEP.:
I don't care about your cleaning: oil or water, as you please.
But you will not have my sacking if you don't deposit these.
Shake with cold or sweat with fever; well or ill's the same to me.
I don't want you foreign strangers. That's enough of talking. See?

*He goes into the house.*

CHARM. (*looking after him and hearing the door bang*):
Are you really off? He surely was a slaver in his day.
He has no compassion in him. But it's no use here to stay.
All my clothes are dripping on me. I will to the temple go
And sleep off my bout of drinking—I have had too much, you know.

Mr. Neptune mixed a jorum which my stomach has upset—
I can't stand his Grecian vintage, and I feel uneasy yet.
If the bout had lasted longer, in his locker we should lie.
As it is, we only just escaped to tell the history.
Yes, I think that I had better go and see if I can find
My old friend the pimp, who, with me at Dan Neptune's table dined.

(*Goes into the temple.*)

End of Act II

## ACT III

### Scene I

Daemones (*comes out from his house*):

Gods sport with men in very wondrous wise.
We cannot rest e'en when we close our eyes.
I, for example, this last night, meseems,
Had some most strange and most uncanny dreams.
I thought I saw a naughty monkey try
To steal some swallows from their nest on high;
He could not reach them; so to me: "My friend,"
Said he, "would you a ladder kindly lend?"
"These birds," said I, "come from my natal earth:
Procne and Philomela gave them birth;
They are my people; please leave them alone."
Thereat the monkey, now much fiercer grown,
Began to threaten me with what he'ld do,
And said that I with him to Court must go.
I was annoyed to think a dirty ape
Should in my presence dare to do this rape;
So, as he seemed inclined to put up fight,
I got some ropes and with them bound him tight.
Such was my dream. I wonder, what it meant?
I can't imagine why to me 'twas sent.
But listen! Just close by I heard a shout
Within the temple. What's it all about?

## Scene II

Trachalio *runs from the temple in great excitement and makes an harangue in the style of an advocate pleading for his clients*:

Come, ye people of Cyrene! Come, to us assistance give,
All ye farmers and the settlers who about this country live.
Help the helpless; on the ungodly righteous retribution send,
Do not let the wicked triumph o'er the guiltless in the end.
Champion the cause of those who for their good name have regard,
Read a lesson to the reckless, pay to virtue her reward.
See that in this goodly land the laws shall ever reverence have,
Nor allow the weak to suffer and by force be made a slave.
Those who hear me, come and help us! come as champions one and all,
Hasten to the temple, hasten! Lo, again to you I call!
Suppliants are we to Venus and her priestess, as is due.
Wring the neck of wrong before its time has come to fall on you.

*He falls at Daemones' feet, and clasps him by the knees.*

DAEMONES :
What's your trouble ?

TRACH. : By your knees I call you, sir, whoe'er you be.

DAEM. : Nay let go, and tell me rather why with shouting you're so free.

TRACH. : I entreat you, I beseech you ; as you hope this year to grow
Crops of silphium, and sirpy that on you will wealth bestow,
And to Capua send them safe and sound across the roaring main
And to keep your eyes quite dry from bleariness.

DAEM. : Pray, are you sane ?

TRACH. :
As you trust that fields a-bloom with magydar your eyes may greet,
Don't refuse to listen to my supplications, I entreat.

DAEM. :
By your legs and shins and back I bid you tell me why these cries,
As you hope that crops of trouble for you this year may arise
And that rods in pickle waiting everywhere about be found.

TRACH.:

Why these curses? 'Twas with blessings tha
I prayed you should be crowned.

DAEM.:

I do not intend to curse you. To the gods
merely pray
That what you deserve and look for they ma
duly send your way.

TRACH.: Prithee, sir, take action quickly.

(*Falls again before him.*

DAEM.: What's all this? Be not afraid

TRACH.:

Two poor girls are in the temple, and they sorel
need your aid.
At the shrine of Venus there are wicked deed
that have been done
Openly against all justice, and the laws ar
overthrown.
Furthermore, the priest of Venus has been shame
fully assaulted.

DAEM.:

What is that? What man is there with insolenc
so high exalted
As to dare to hurt our priestess? And thes
maidens, who are they,
And what wrong is being done them?

TRACH. : Please attend, and I will say.
They have clasped the goddess' statue and a most atrocious knave
Wants to drag them off perforce—by rights their freedom both should have.

DAEM. :
Who's the man who holds the gods so cheap ?
A few words will suffice.

TRACH. :
He's a dirty malefactor, full of treachery and vice,
Parricide and base betrayer, filthy, shameless, and abhorred—
Well, in fact, he is a PIMP, and there's his portrait in one word.

DAEM. : Such a rogue with such a record surely's ripe for punishment.

TRACH. :
Yes, the villain seized the priestess by the throat with fell intent.

DAEM. :
Well, for that he soon shall suffer. Here, you fellows, come out quick :
Tearem ! Smasher !

TRACH. : Pray, sir, help us.

DAEM.: Hurry, or you'll feel my stick.

TEAREM *and* SMASHER, *two very sturdy slaves, professional whippers to the household, appear.*

Oh, you're here then. Come behind me.

TRACH.: That's exactly what I wish.
Tell them, please, to squeeze his eyes out, as a cook treats cuttle-fish.

(*The two slaves go into the temple.*)

DAEM.:
Haul the fellow here feet foremost. Drag him like a slaughtered pig.

(*Enters the temple.*)

TRACH. (*listening at the temple door*):
What a noise! Me thinks their fists are combing out the rascal's wig.

(*Calling to the slaves.*)

Break his jaw and knock his teeth out! Ah, the girls are coming now.
Pretty dears, they feel afraid and want my company, I trow.

## SCENE III

AMPELISCA *and* PALAESTRA *come out from the temple. They have been torn away from the statue by* LABRAX, *and are bruised and dishevelled.*

PALAESTRA :

In lamentable plight are we—
There is no hope of solace near.
No help, no comfort can I see,
Nor flight from danger drear !

AMPELISCA :

We both with dread are trembling still,
Such things we've had to bear this while.
We have been used so very ill,
Our master is so vile.

PAL. :

He hurled the priestess forth, and then
Quick from the statue dragged us down.
No shame has he for gods or men,
No mercy to us shown.

AMP. :

As things go now, in our distress,
Without a guide, without a friend,
'Twere best to leave this wretchedness
And find in death an end.

TRACHALIO (*who has been standing aside*) :

What's this ? I'll comfort them. Palaestra !

PAL. : Pray,
Who calls me ?

TRACH. : Ampelisca !

PAL. : Who, I say,
Here speaks my name ?

AMP. : And who is calling me ?

TRACH. :
If you look round, my dear, then you will see.

PAL. (*recognizing him*) :
O hope at length of safety ?

TRACH. : Take good cheer !

PAL. :
If only force might spare us.

TRACH. (*confidently*) : I am here !

PAL. : His force will force me to my death.

TRACH. : No, no
You must not talk like that : it will not do.

PAL. :
Words are no comfort when all hope is gone.

AMP. :
Unless you *act*, Trachalio, we're undone.

PAL. :
I'd rather die than the pimp's insults bear.
But I'm a poor weak woman, and I fear
The thought of death and to leave life behind.

TRACH. : Take courage.

PAL. : Nay, where can we courage find ?

TRACH. :
Don't be afraid—here at the altar sit.

AMP. : How can the altar be more benefit
Than was the statue which we did embrace,
And were by brutal force torn from our place.

TRACH. :

Well, try once more, I pray. Sit down here now ;
And I the plan of my campaign will show.
The altar is your fort, and this its wall ;
I'm its defender, ready at your call.
Venus will help us, and, with her, I bet
We'll foil the malice of the vile pimp yet.

PAL. (*kneeling at the altar*) :

So be it then. As suppliants we entreat
Thee, kindly Venus, kneeling at thy feet,
Before thy altar. Take us under ward
And against danger be our shield and guard.
Send vengeance on those villains who profane
Thy sacred temple ; and let us remain
In shelter at this altar by thy side.
We have by Neptune been well purified.
And even if our garments unwashed be
Regard us innocent of wrong to thee.

TRACH. (*with condescension*) :

I think that is a proper prayer you've made.
Pardon them, Venus ; they were so afraid.
Men say that from a shell you once did spring :
So do not scorn a woman's choicest thing.
(*To the girls*)
But look ! I see him coming from the shrine,
That dear old gentleman, your friend and mine.

## Scene IV

PALAESTRA *and* AMPELISCA *draw aside as* DAEMONES *drives* LABRAX *out of the temple.* TRACHALIO *steps forward. The two whipping slaves are in the background.*

DAEMONES :

Well, of all the sacrilegious ruffians you're the worst by far
Out you come ! You, take your places. Why, where are they ?

TRACHALIO (*officiously pointing to the slaves*): Here they are.

DAEM. :

Good ! That's just what I required. Tell that rascal to come here.
(*To* LABRAX)
You're the rogue that wants to break the laws that all good men revere
Made with heaven. (*To the slaves.*) Come, just give him on the jaw a good straight hit.

LABRAX :

This is most unlawful conduct, and you'll have to pay for it.

DAEM. : Does the rascal dare to threaten ?

LABR. : I am of my lawful dues
Robbed and cheated. You shall never take my slaves unless I choose.

TRACH. :

Pick some noble of Cyrene. He shall arbitrator be.
And let him decide between us if they're yours or should be free.
I will bet that his decision is that you in prison stay.
For the rest of your existence, till you wear the jail away.

LABR. :

When I said my prayers this morning certainly I never thought
That to parley with a jail-bird I should thus perforce be brought.
(*To* DAEMONES)
Pray, sir.

DAEM. : Nay, that fellow knows you; argue with him.

LABR. : I'ld prefer
You to deal with.

TRACH. (*triumphantly*) : You will have to deal with me, my pretty sir;
Tell me, are these girls your bond slaves?

LABR. : Yes.

TRACH. : On either of the two
Lay your finger-tip one moment.

LABR.: What will happen if I do?

TRACH.: Why, I'll make a punch-ball of you and knock all your stuffing out.

LABR.: Can't I take my own bond servants from the altar, you fat lout?

TRACH.: No, you can't! Our law won't let you.

LABR.: With your laws I don't agree.
They are mine, these girls, I tell you; and must come along with me.
If the old man is enamoured, hard cash is the only way,
And if Venus want them, she can have them if my price she pay.

DAEM. (*interrupting*):
You get money from a goddess! Hark ye now and ponder well;
And to you my fixed decision in this matter I will tell.
Just you try your little games, or dare these maidens to annoy:
I will give you such a dressing you won't know yourself, my boy.
(*To his slaves*)
When I nod to you two fellows, knock his eyes out, or you'll find
This good whip as close about you as the strings that garlands bind.

LABR. :
This is force you use against me.

TRACH. : Force ! The biggest rogue unhung
Talks to us of force. Good heavens !

LABR. : Jail-bird, keep a civil tongue.

TRACH. : I allow it. I'm a jail-bird, you the prize for virtue got.
How does that affect the question of their freedom ?

LABR. : Freedom ! Rot !

TRACH. :
They are true authentic Grecians, and your mistresses should be ;
One of them was born at Athens and of folk of high degree—

DAEM. : What is that I hear you saying ?

TRACH. : She was born on Grecian earth,
I repeat it, in great Athens, and, moreover, free by birth.

DAEM. : Is she then my country-woman ?

TRACH. : Don't you from Cyrene come ?

DAEM. :
No, indeed. Our Attic Athens is my old ancestral home.

TRACH. :
Prithee, sir, defend your people.

DAEM. : O my daughter, in my mind,
When I look upon this maiden, your lost image there I find.
(*To* TRACH.)
She was three years when we lost her : now she would be just so tall.

LABR. (*interrupting*) :
Be her birthplace Thebes or Athens makes no difference at all.
They're my slaves, and to their rightful owner I good money paid.

TRACH. :
O you shameless prowling cat you, stealing for your beastly trade
Children from their hapless parents ! This one's country I don't know.
(*pointing to* AMPELISCA)
But she comes of better people than a scab like you, I vow.

LABR. (*sarcastically*) : Are they yours ?

TRACH. : Let's have a wager who has got the cleaner hide.
If your weals are not as many as the nails in a ship's side,

You may write me down a liar. Then, when I your back have seen,
I will show you mine. And, if you find it quite unmarked and clean,
So that any bottle-maker would exclaim: "A perfect skin,"
Is there any reason, tell me, why I should not do you in
Till I've had enough of whipping? Now, don't look at them like that!
If you touch them, I will knock your eyes out for you, and that's flat.

LABR.:
Just because you say I shall not, I will take them off with me.

DAEM.: How, pray?

LABR.: I will bring up Vulcan. He and Venus don't agree.
(*Goes and knocks at the door of Daemones' house*)

TRACH.: Where's he going?

LABR.: Hi there, hark ye!

DAEM.: If you dare to go that way,
On your face with fisty pitchforks you will feel me making hay.

THE WHIPPING SLAVES (*to* LABRAX) :

Figs are what we feed on, master. There's no fire in our place.

DAEM. :

You shall have it, if you'll let me light it on your ugly face.

LABR. :

I will go and find it somewhere.

DAEM. : When you've found, what will you do ?

LABR. : I will make a great big blaze.

DAEM. : To burn the badness out of you ?

LABR. : No, I'll roast your pretty darlings.

DAEM. : I will singe your beard, my son ;

And will throw you to the vultures when your carcase is half-done.

(*To himself*)

Ah ! I've guessed it. Here's the monkey that I dreamed about last night,

He who tried to seize the swallows from the nest in my despite.

TRACH. :
Sir, there's something I would ask you. Will you guard the girls from wrong,
While I go and fetch my master? I will not be very long.

DAEM. : Find him then and bring him quickly.

TRACH. (*pointing to* LABRAX) : But this fellow—

DAEM. : He will rue
Any harm he tries to do them.

TRACH. : Watch him.

DAEM. : Right!
Now, off with you!

TRACH. :
Keep him close, sir. Don't let go, sir. For my master said to-day
He would hand him to the hangman or a talent he would pay.

DAEM. : Run along and do not worry. We have got him safe and sure.

TRACH. : I will go and get my master and be back within the hour.

(*Exit*)

## SCENE V

DAEMONES (*turning to* LABRAX) :
Would you prefer, sir pimp, at peace to stay
With or without a whipping? Prithee, say.

LABRAX :
A fig for you, old cock ! I mean to take
My girls away, whatever fuss you make,
You and your Venus and your mighty Jove.
I'll pull them by the hair, and make them move.

DAEM. : Well, touch them !

LABR. : Well, I will.

DAEM. : Just do, they're here.

LABR. : Just tell those fellows not to stand so near ;
Then I will do it.

DAEM. : They'll come nearer yet.

LABR. : To me they won't come nearer, I will bet.

DAEM. : What will you do, if they advance ?

LABR. (*promptly*) : Retreat.
But if, old fellow, you and I should meet
Some day in town, I'll forfeit my own name
If I don't play on you a proper game.

DAEM. :
You may perhaps be able there to do it.
But if you touch these girls meanwhile, you'll rue it.
You'll find yourself at once in a big mess.

LABR. : How big ?

DAEM. : Enough for even pimps, I guess.

LABR. : A fig for all your threats ! You may be loth :
But they are mine, and I will have them both.

DAEM. : Just lay your finger on them !

LABR. : Well, I shall.

DAEM. : Then, if you do, you know what will befall.
Here, Tearem ! Go and bring without delay
Two clubs.

LABR. : Why clubs ?

DAEM. : And good ones ! Quick, away !
(*To* LABR.)
I'll see, my friend, you get to-day your due.

LABR. : Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear ! Bo-hoo, bo-hoo !
I've lost my trusty helmet in the sea.
If it were here 'twould very useful be.
(*To* DAEM.)
May I not speak to my own girls, alack ?

DAEM. : No, you may not. Good ! Here's my clubman back.

TEAREM *returns, bringing with him two stout clubs.*

LABR. :
I feel a ringing in my ears already.

DAEM. :
You, Smasher, take one club and stand there steady ;
You take the other, Tearem. Now—one, two !
About ! Right face ! I'll tell you what to do.
If on those girls he should one finger place
Against their will, then do not look for grace,
Unless you give him such a drubbing, mind,
That he won't know his homeward way to find.

And if he should a conversation try,
In place of them, with clubs do you reply.
While if to leave this spot he shall essay
Then with your sticks about his legs make play.

LABR.: What, won't they let me go?

DAEM.: Is that quite plain
Wait till the valet shall return again—
He's gone to fetch his master. When he come,
Your task is done and you may go off home.
Now, mind you carry my instructions out!

LABR.: (*Exit*)
Oh dear, these temples, how they shift about!

*Pointing to the slaves.*

Look at those images with clubs in hand!
Where Venus was, now Hercules does stand.
I really do not know which way to go;
For land and ocean both are now my foe.

(*Calls*)

Palaestra!

TEAREM (*coming forward*): Well!

LABR.: Oh dash it, I protest!
It was my dear Palaestra I addressed.
Hi, Ampelisca!

SMASHER (*coming forward*): Now, my friend, take care.

LABR. (*retreating*): Fools oft give good advice, I'm well aware.

(*To the slaves*)
But I say, you—would an unpleasant fuss
Be made if I came closer?

TEAR.: Not to us.

LABR.: To me then?

TEAR.: No; not if away you keep.

LABR.: From what?

TEAR.: These clubs. They'd send you fast asleep.

LABR.: Pray, can I go?

TEAR. (*showing his club*): Yes if you wish you may.
(*and advancing threateningly*)

LABR. (*quickly*):
Thank you. Stand still. I much prefer to stay.
Oh dear, oh dear. I'm in a pretty plight.
I'd best take up my quarters for the night,
And to invest their fortress now begin.
I've made my mind up. I will not give in.

## SCENE VI

PLESIDIPPUS *and* TRACHALIO *come in hurrying back from town. At first they do not see* LABRAX *who is sitting by the temple door*

PLESIDIPPUS:
Did that foul pimp attempt by force to throw
My mistress from the altar?

TRACHALIO: Yes, just so.
PLES.: You should have killed him straight.

TRACH.: I had no knife.
PLES.: A stick or stone can take a rascal's life.

TRACH.: I know, of course, that he's a dirty hog,
But would you have me stone him like a dog?

LABRAX (*perceiving them*):
I'm done. Young Plesidippus here I see.
I fear that he will sweep the floor with me.

PLES.:
Were the girls sitting at the altar base
When you came for me?

TRACH.: Yes, and in their place
They're sitting still.

PLES.: Who keeps them under ward?

TRACH. (*importantly*):
A nice old gentleman is now on guard—
He and his slaves. I bade him keep them tight.
He lives next door and has been most polite.

PLES.:
Now take me to the pimp the quickest way.

LABR. (*coming forward*):
Good day, young sir!

PLES.: I don't want your good day.
Scruffing or scragging: tell me which of these
You would prefer: choose quickly.

LABR.: Neither, please.

PLES.: Run quickly to the shore, Trachalio,
And tell my comrades to the port to go,
Whom I brought with me here that we might pack
This fellow to the hangman. Then come back
And go on guard for me. Without delay
An action for ejectment I will lay.
(*To the pimp.*)
Come, march to court.

LABR.: What crime have I committed?

PLES.: The earnest money for the girl acquitted
You straightway took her off.

LABR.: I did not.

PLES.: Why
Deny plain facts?

LABR.: To take her I did try.
But, though I may have started off all right,
You see my projects weren't successful quite.
I told you that at Venus' shrine we'ld meet.
Am I not here, and waiting you to greet?

PLES.:
Say that in court. Two words are here enow
"This way"—

LABR.: Dear Charmides assist me now!
They've roped me round the neck.

CHARMIDES (*coming out from the temple where he has been sleeping*): Who calls my name?

LABR. : See how they're hauling me.

CHARM. : I see that same,
And am delighted at it.

LABR. : Help me, pray !

CHARM. : Who is the man that hales you thus away ?

LABR. : Young Plesidippus.

CHARM. : Reap as you have sown.
The stocks are your fit place, as you must own.
You've only got the wish of most men's mind.

LABR. : What's that ?

CHARM. : That they may what they look for find.

LABR. : Come with me please.

CHARM. : Your advice is bad, like you.
You're for the stocks : you want me to come too.

PLES. (*dragging* LABRAX *off*) : Still hanging back ?

LABR. : I'm done.

CHARM. : I wish you were.

PLES. :
Palaestra, Ampelisca ! Wait just here
Till I return.

TEAR. : Till then I would suggest
They come to us for shelter.

PLES. : That is best.
Thank you. They shall.

LABR. : You thieves !

TEAR. (*dragging him by the neck*) :
What's that you say ?

LABR. : Help, help, my dear Palaestra !

PLES. (*assisting* TEAREM) : Rogue, this way !

LABR. (*to* CHARMIDES) : Dear guest !

CHARM. : I'm not ! The name I won't allow.

LABR. : What, throw me off ?

CHARM. : I've finished with you now.
One drink with you, my friend, is quite enough.

LABR. : May the gods blast you !

CHARM. : Oh, cut out that stuff !

*To the audience as* LABRAX *disappears*

Men change to other creatures, well we know ;
And so the pimp will now a stock-dove grow.
For in the stocks he'll make a cosy nest,
And find his neck with a stock-collar pressed.
I think I'll go to court and tell my tale ;
Perhaps I may assist him—into jail !

(*Follows the others*)

END OF ACT III

## ACT IV

### Scene I

Daemones *left alone appears undecided. He looks longingly towards the temple, into which the girls have gone. But he can be seen from his own house, and he hesitates.*

Daemones :

I'm glad that I was able to keep guard
Over those girls. A good deed brings reward.
I am their patron now ; and really both
Are charming creatures, in the bloom of youth.
But my old wife will never leave me free.
I can't get at them. She's her eye on me !

(*Looks down the beach.*)

I wonder too what Gripus is about.
Last night, in spite of storm, he would go out
To sea a-fishing. He'ld have shown more sense
If he had stayed in bed at my expense.
His labour with his nets has been in vain,
This windy night it was but useless pain.
If I this boisterous weather understand
All that he's caught I'll cook upon one hand.

(*A woman's voice is heard calling.*)

Ah, there's my wife with—" Lunch ". I must go in,
And in my ears her silly talk she'll din.

*Exit*

## Scene II

*As* Daemones *goes in, his slave the fisherman* Gripus *comes along the beach. He has a cast-net over his shoulder with a leather wallet inside: a rope trails behind. He is struggling against a desire to sing, to which he finally yields.*

Gripus:

To my good patron Neptune thanks I pay.
From his salt fishy realms I've come to-day
Enriched with plunder.
My little boat's undamaged by the sea,
And strange fat fish he now has given me,
So that I wonder.
'Tis the best sport that I have had as yet;
And not an ounce of fish is in this net.

(*He stops, takes the net from his shoulder, and laying it carefully on the sand resumes*:)

'Twas night when I got up and dressed
And set myself to work.
Gain I preferred to sleep and rest,
No labour do I shirk.
The wind blew fierce, but slaves must try
To help their master's poverty.

A sluggard is not worth his keep:
I hate a lazy drone.
A man should go without his sleep
When work has to be done.
He should not wait until his master
Prods him to make him go the faster.

A lout who loves to lie in bed
Will never money make.
You miserable sleepy head!
By me example take.
I who worked hard and scorned my ease
Can now be idle when I please.

(*Stooping down he extracts the wallet from the net and shakes it. Well satisfied with the sound, he sings with increased fervour:*)

This wallet in the sea I've found.
What's in it has a heavy sound:
It's gold I do not doubt it.
The opportunity employ
To get yourself set free, my boy;
For no one knows about it.

Yes, this is what I think I'll do—
To my old master I will go,
Most sly and sharp I'll be!
I'll offer him a pound or two
If he my liberty bestow—
And he will set me free.

As soon as freedom I have got
I'll buy myself a house and plot,
Slaves, ships, and merchants' wares.
Like Stratonicus in a yacht
I'll sail about and see what's what,
And mix with millionaires.

Then, when my fame has nicely grown,
As monument to my renown
In every man's opinion,
I'll build myself a mighty town :
As Gripus City 'twill be known,
The seat of my dominion.

These are my plans—they're passing fine—
But now it's time for me to dine :
I'll put the bag away.
A King am I, and wealth is mine ;
But this coarse salt and this sour wine
Is all I've got to-day.

## Scene III

*At this moment* Trachalio *appears. He has followed* Gripus *along the beach on his return from the harbour, and calls loudly to him.*

Trachalio : Stop !

Gripus : Why should I ?

Trach. : Let me rid you of this awkward trailing rope.

Grip. : Just let go.

Trach. : Nay, let me help you. You're an honest man, I hope.
Good deeds done to good folk are not ever wasted, so they say.

Grip. : I've no fish, young fellow. It was stormy weather yesterday.

TRACH. : It's not fish I seek, dear comrade ; but I want a word with you.

GRIP. : Oh, your talk, it makes me tired. Devil take you, let me go !

TRACH. : No, you don't ! Just wait a moment.

GRIP. : Damn you, don't pull me, my lad !

TRACH. : Listen to me.

GRIP. : No, I will not.

TRACH. (*threateningly*) : Soon you'll wish then that you had.

GRIP. (*uneasy*) : Tell me then.

TRACH. : It's most important : something private for your ear.

GRIP. : Tell me.

TRACH. (*pretending to look about*) : Is there anybody lurking near us, who might hear ?

GRIP. : Has that anything to do with me, pray ?

TRACH. : Yes, my friend, it has indeed. Can I trust to your discretion ?

GRIP. (*exasperated*) : Tell me quickly what you need.

TRACH. : Promise first you'll keep your promise in the sight of gods and men.

GRIP. : Well, I promise I will keep my promise to you.

TRACH.: Listen then.

(*Very slowly and seriously*)

A thief once stole a thing when I was there.
Of the true owner I was well aware.
So up I went to master thief and made
This offer to him: "My dear friend," I said,
"The owner of that thing I know full well:
But, if you give me half, I will not tell."
As yet no answer from him's come my way.
What do you think that I should have? Please say
A half.

GRIP.: Nay, more. If not of course you'll go
Straight to the owner.

TRACH.: Yes, exactly so.

(*Changing his tone again*)

Listen now. The tale I told you has to do with you.

GRIP. (*taken by surprise*): Eh, what?

TRACH.: Who is owner of that wallet I know perfectly.

GRIP.: Oh, rot!

TRACH.: And I know how it was lost too.

GRIP.: Well, I know how it was found;
And I know the man who found it and has got it safe and sound.
This, my lad, is not your business anymore than yours is mine.

You may know who was the owner, but I tell you, I know fine
Who's the owner now, my pippin ; and I mean to hold it tight.

TRACH. : What, would not the owner get it if he claimed it ? That's not right.

GRIP. : Don't you worry. There's no owner of it—not a mother's son,
Save myself, who in my hunting from the sea this trophy won.

TRACH. (*sarcastically*) :
Oh, indeed !

GRIP. : Well, are not fishes mine that I find in the sea ?
When I catch them, if I catch them, surely they belong to me ?
No one claims them when I sell them in the street : they're mine to sell ;
And the sea is common ground for all and sundry.

TRACH. : Very well !
Then this bag is common also, if it in the sea was found.

GRIP. (*boiling over*) :
O you shameful, shameless villain. O you very dirty hound !
If your words were law, you rascal, where should we poor fishers be ?

When we brought our fish to market, not a customer we'd see.
Every one would claim his portion—"They were caught at sea," they'd say;
"And they're common."

TRACH.: Oh you shameless rascal tell me this, I pray.
How can fish compare with wallets? They are not a bit the same.

GRIP.: I can't help it. What I get with hook or net I count fair game:
All the things my nets and hooks may catch belong to me alone.

TRACH.: Even though they be utensils?

GRIP. (*sarcastically*): You're a Solomon, my son.

TRACH.: You base villain, have you ever seen for sale a wallet-fish?
'Tis not right that you should follow every kind of trade you wish.
You can't be portmanteau-maker and a fisherman beside.
This has got no scales upon it: it is made of cane and hide.
Either be prepared to tell me in what species it is classed,
Or give up a thing which never through the waves of ocean passed.

GRIP. :
Have you never heard men talk of wallet-fish ?

TRACH. : There's no such sort.

GRIP. :
Yes, there is. A fisher knows them. But they're very seldom caught.
They don't often come to land ; they much prefer the open sea.

TRACH. :
Stuff and nonsense ! Don't you try to play your games, you rogue, on me.
What's their colour ?

GRIP. (*pointing to the wallet*) : Little ones are of this shade. Big fish are black ;
And the others reddish mostly.

TRACH. : Yes, I know ; and soon your back
Will be like a wallet-fish, a very pretty scarlet hue,
With the skin just nicely reddened—and will then turn black and blue.

GRIP. : What a rogue is this I've hit on !

TRACH. : Time, you know, is on the wing,
While we're talking. Are you willing to a judge our case to bring ?

GRIP. : Let the wallet judge.

TRACH. : That's silly.

GRIP. : Mr. Wiseman, here's to you.

TRACH. : We must have an arbitrator to decide between us two
Else I'll never let you have it.

GRIP. : Are you sane ?
I'm not too sure.

TRACH. :
No. I drank this very morning a full pint of hellebore.

GRIP. : As for me, I'm quite demented. But I shan't let go for that.

TRACH. :
One word more, and with a buffet on your head I'll lay you flat.
If you don't let go I'll squeeze out all the moisture you have got,
As they squeeze a sponge before they put it in the drying-pot.

GRIP. :
Touch me ! To the ground I'll dash you as I throw a polypus.
Put your fists up.

TRACH. (*peacefully*) : Let's divide it : there's enough for both of us.

GRIP. :
Don't expect that from this wallet aught but trouble you will get.
Well, I'm off.

(*Moves towards the house*)

TRACH. (*seizing the other end of the rope*):
Here, wait a minute! Look, another course I've set.

GRIP.: Though you think that you're the look-out,
I'm the man who steers this craft.
Drop that rope.

TRACH.: You drop that wallet! Then we're ship-shape fore and aft.

GRIP.:
Not one shaving, not one stiver from this for you will there be.

TRACH.:
You can't prove your case, you rascal, just by saying "No" to me.
Give me half, or else before an arbitrator we'll proceed
And he'll hold the stakes until he gives decision.

GRIP.: Oh, indeed!
Dash it all! I fished it up at sea—

TRACH.: And I looked on from land—

GRIP.: Working with my boat and netting—

TRACH.: Yes, but don't you understand?
If the owner were to come and start to make a great ado,
I who looked on should be reckoned just as much a thief as you.

GRIP.: Certainly.

TRACH. (*triumphantly*): Now wait a minute. Will you kindly, sir, explain
How it is that I'm a thief and yet have no share in the gain?

GRIP.:
No, I won't! I'm not acquainted with your city-laws so fine:
But I say this is *my* wallet.

TRACH.: And I say that it is *mine*.

GRIP.: Stop! I've got a plan! You need not either thief or partner be.

TRACH.: How?

GRIP.: Why, let's leave one another and each go his own way free
Don't you split; I'll give you nothing; you will keep a quiet tongue;
I'll be mum; and no one surely then can say that aught is wrong.

TRACH.:
Come to business. What's your offer?

GRIP.: I have made it long ago.
Drop that rope, take your departure and do not annoy me so.

TRACH.: Well, I'll make a counter-offer.

GRIP.: Prithee, make off, and make haste.

TRACH. : I suppose you know the people who live in this dreary waste ?

GRIP. : Yes, of course I know my neighbours, who reside next door to me.

TRACH. : Where's your home ?

GRIP. : Across the plain there, just as far as you can see.

TRACH. : Shall we ask the man who lives within this cottage to decide ?

GRIP. : Slacken off the rope a little. Let me think. You stand aside.

TRACH. : Very well.

GRIP. (*to the audience*) : Hurrah, the booty's mine ! I do not care a rap.
He suggests as judge my master. I have got him in a trap !
My old man will never rob me of a sixpence, that I know.
What a chance the fellow gives me !
I before his judge will go.

TRACH. : What's your answer ?

GRIP. : Though I know that all this stuff is mine by right,
I'll consent to arbitration—for I am too proud to fight.

TRACH. : Good !

GRIP. : Your judge is quite a stranger ; but, if he impartial be,
He's my friend, though I don't know him : if he's not, he's naught to me.

## SCENE IV

DAEMONES *comes out of the temple followed by the two girls, and behind them by the two whipping-slaves, clubs in hand. The girls by gestures invite him to shelter them in his house*

DAEMONES :
I am sorry, my dears, but it really appears that I'm in a bit of a fix.
Because of you two my wife, you must know, might very well break up our sticks.
She would cry out : " You ought never here to have brought your women in front of your wife—"
It is better for you to the altar to go than that I should fly there for my life.

PALAESTRA :
Oh pity our plight ! We are dying of fright !

DAEM. :
I'll see that you come to no harm.
While I'm with you here, you have nothing to fear, and there's really no cause for alarm.
*Turning angrily to the slaves.*

Dash it all, can't you see you need not follow me ?
Your task for the moment is done.
Be off with you home, and wait there till I come :
You are guardians off guard now. Be gone !

*The two slaves retire, and* DAEMONES *is preparing to enjoy the girls' company when he is interrupted by* GRIPUS *and* TRACHALIO, *who have been standing on the further side*

GRIPUS : 'Morning, master !

DAEM. : Morning, Gripus.

TRACH. : Is this fellow, sir, your slave ?

GRIP. : I am not ashamed to own it.

TRACH. : I with you no talk will have.

GRIP. : If you will not, prithee, leave us.

TRACH. : Answer, sir, my question, pray ;
Is he yours ?

DAEM. : He is, that's certain.

TRACH. (*looking at* GRIPUS) : Good ! I have no more to say.
Sir, my greetings.
(*Bows to* DAEMONES)

DAEM. : I return them. Did you not some time ago
Hurry off to fetch your master ?

TRACH.: Yes, sir!

DAEM.: Well, what's this ado?

TRACH.: Is this fellow really yours, sir?

DAEM.: Yes indeed.

TRACH. (*looking again at* GRIPUS): I say no more.

DAEM.: What's the trouble?

TRACH.: Why, your servant's rotten to the very core.

DAEM.: Rascal is he? What's he done then?

TRACH.: I should like his ankles broke.

DAEM.: What is it you're fighting over?

TRACH.: I'll explain his little joke.

GRIP.: No, I'll do it.

TRACH.: Nay, I'm taking now a hand in your fine game.

GRIP.: Take yourself away, you rascal, if you've got an ounce of shame.

DAEM.: Gripus, please attend and listen.

GRIP.: Is that fellow to speak first?

DAEM.: Hold your tongue! You, tell your story.

GRIP. : He, a stranger ! I shall burst.

TRACH. (*importantly*) : Can't you stop his noisy tongue, sir ? Well, as I began to say,
He has got the very wallet which the pimp has lost to-day.

GRIP. : No, I have not got the wallet.

TRACH. : Why, it's lying full in view.

GRIP. : Well, I wish you could not see it ! What has it to do with you.
If I have or have not got it ? Can't you let my business be ?

TRACH. : Is your business straight or crooked ? That's where I come in, you see.

GRIP. : You can hang me on a gibbet if I did not find the bag
In my net when I was fishing. Why should you then have the swag ?

DAEM. : He has got you there, young fellow. Tell me now ; what would you have ?

TRACH. : I don't say the bag is mine, sir ; and no part therein I crave.
But inside there is a casket which belongs to that poor maid,
Who, I told you, should be free, sir.

DAEM. : Is that one the girl you said.
Comes from my old home ?

TRACH.: It is, sir. In
that bag there is a store
Of the trinkets that Palaestra, when she was a
baby, wore.
They're no use to him at all, sir; but they'ld
help the girl to find
Her lost parents, if she had them, and to help
he were inclined.

DAEM.: She shall have them.

GRIP.: To this rascal I won't
hand one stiver over.

TRACH.: Just the casket and the trinkets—that is
all I would recover.

GRIP.: But suppose they're made of gold, sir?

TRACH: Well what of it? I will pay.
Gold with gold I'll counterbalance; silver
against silver weigh.

GRIP.: Let me see your gold, young fellow; then
the casket you shall see.

DAEM.: If you can't keep quiet, Gripus, you will
soon in trouble be.
Go on with your story.

TRACH.: Pray, sir, have compassion
on the maid;
If indeed this is the wallet which the pimp at sea
mislaid,
As I strongly think it is, sir, though I cannot tell
for sure.

GRIP. : Look, the rascal wants to trap us !

TRACH. : Let me say a few words more.
If that bag's indeed the wallet which I know the pimp did own,
Then the girls would recognize it, if to them it should be shown.

GRIP. : Shown to them ! What next I wonder ?

DAEM. : Surely, you do not declare
They've no right to see the wallet ?

GRIP. : Why, it would be most unfair.

DAEM. : How so ?

GRIP. : Why, when once they've seen it they would hasten to reply
That they recognized it clearly.

TRACH. : O you sink of infamy !
Do you think that other people are like you, you perjured beast ?

GRIP. : While my master's on my side, lad, I don't mind that in the least.

TRACH. : Well, he won't be on your side soon, for the proofs are lying here.

DAEM. : Now then, Gripus, pay attention. You, sir, make your meaning clear.

TRACH.: I have done that once already, but I'll do it once again.
Both these maidens, I declare, sir, should be free. Now, is that plain?
This poor girl was stolen from Athens.

(*Pointing to* PALAESTRA)

GRIP.: Will you please explain to me,
How does it concern the wallet whether they be slaves or free?

TRACH.: Must I spend the whole day, rascal, telling all the story through?

DAEM.: Now, don't start abusive language. Tell me what I want to know.

TRACH.:
In that bag a little wicker casket, sir, I think you'll find,
And some tokens which the maiden when she left her home behind
Brought from Athens—as I told you Athens is her native place—
And she hopes that with these tokens she her parents yet may trace.

GRIP.: What a rigmarole he's making. Devil take the dirty scum!
Can't the girls speak for themselves, pray, or have they been stricken dumb?

TRACH.: Nay a silent woman's better than a prating miss, 'tis said,

GRIP. : On that reckoning, you rascal, you are neither man nor maid.

TRACH. : How so ?

GRIP. : Neither speech nor silence with you any good afford.
When may I begin to speak, sir ?

DAEM. : If you say another word, I will knock your head off, Gripus.

TRACH. : As I started to observe,
Tell him please to hand the casket to them, as they well deserve.
If he claims reward for finding, he shall have it, and beside
He may keep the other objects which are doubtless there inside.

GRIP. : That's what you say now, you villain ; when you see it's mine by right :
Lately it was " Halves " you tried for.

TRACH. : And do now.

GRIP. : I saw a kite
Swooping downwards from the heaven *try* in just that self same way.
But in spite of all his *trying* he was cheated of his prey.

DAEM. : Gripus, will you please keep quiet ! Else you'll feel my whip ere long.

GRIP. : I'll be quiet soon enough, sir, if that fellow holds his tongue.

DAEM. : Now then hand the wallet over.

GRIP. : If no
trinkets are inside
I'm to have it back, remember.

DAEM. : Yes.

GRIP. : In you, sir, I confide.

(DAEMONES *comes into the centre of the stage and groups the other four about him,* GRIPUS *and* TRACHALIO *on the one side,* PALAESTRA *and* AMPELISCA *on the other. He addresses the girls, and especially* PALAESTRA, *first*)

DAEM. :
Now listen, my dears. Pray lend me your ears, and to all that I say give good heed.
Is the box you described in this wallet inside ?

PALAESTRA : It is, I assure you, indeed.

GRIP. :
Dash it all ! It's not fair. Why she said it was there before she had seen it a minute.

PAL. :
If you'll kindly refrain, I will make matters plain by telling you all that is in it.
When the bag he unlocks then a small wicker box will be found. Its contents I will name.
You can keep it concealed : I don't want it revealed : to me it will be all the same.
I claim them alone : you can keep for your own all the rest it contains, if you please.
But if I can show they are mine, you'll allow that I have a title to these.

DAEM. :
That seems justice to me. I for my part agree.

GRIP. : I don't think at all it is right.
She may be a witch who finds things with a switch or she may perhaps have second sight.
She will get it correct and you'll never detect her, whatever the trick she prefers.

DAEM. :
Witches' tricks will be vain ; she will nothing obtain unless she can prove it is hers.

(*The circle of listeners breaks up, and all gather round* GRIPUS, *who is kneeling on the ground by the precious wallet.*)

DAEM. (*to* GRIPUS) :
Open now the wallet quickly that it's contents I may know.

GRIP. (*undoing the cord*) :
There !

TRACH. (*seeing the casket*) : A knock out !

DAEM. (*to* PALAESTRA) : Look !

PAL. : The casket !

DAEM. : Is this it ?

PAL. : Indeed, 'tis so.
O my parents, in this casket I have got you safe confined !
Here are all my hopes and prospects that those lost ones I may find.

GRIP. :
Well, my girl, the help of heaven you most certainly will lose,
Who within a little casket both your parents thus enclose.

DAEM. (*taking the casket*) :
Come here, Gripus. This concerns you. You, my girl, stand right away,
And describe what's in this casket, every thing; and if you say
One word wrong, then you are beaten. It will be no use at all
Afterwards to make corrections; by this you must stand or fall.

GRIP. : O just judge!

TRACH. : He's not like you then.
(*Looking at* GRIPUS *in disgust*)
You of wrong have supped your fill.

DAEM. (*to* PALAESTRA) :
Now, my dear, begin describing. Listen, Gripus, and keep still.

PAL. : First, some trinkets.

DAEM. : Yes, I see them.

GRIP. : Dash it, that's a nasty blow!
Wait : don't show them to her, master!

DAEM. : Will you, please, describe them now.

PAL. :
There's a little golden dagger with a name upon it.

DAEM. : Well,
What's the name upon the dagger ?

PAL. : It my father's name does tell.
Next, there is a little chopper double-edged and made of gold.
And upon that little chopper my dear mother's name is told.

DAEM. : Stop. What is your father's name, girl ?

PAL. : Daemones.

DAEM. : Ye gods divine,
Where are now my hopes and yearnings ?

GRIP. : Nay, I ask you, where are mine ?

TRACH. : Pray, proceed.

GRIP. : There is no hurry. Devil take you all the same !

DAEM. : Now upon the little chopper tell me, please, your mother's name.

PAL. : Daedalis.

DAEM. : The gods salvation send !

GRIP. : They send to me despair.

DAEM. : She must be my daughter, Gripus.

GRIP. : She may be, for all I care.
Devil take that prying fellow ! Why did I not look and see
That no one was spying on me ? What a jackass I must be !

PAL. :
Then there is a silver sickle, two clasped hands, and one small pig.

GRIP. :
Oh, damnation take your porker with her piglets, small or big !

PAL. :
And a locket which my father gave me with some golden charms.

DAEM. :
Now I'm sure she is my daughter. Come, my lost one, to my arms !
I'm your lawful father, daughter. Daemones is standing here.
Daedalis, she is your mother, and is in the house quite near.

PAL. (*kissing her father*) :
Take a daughter's greeting father ! Scarcely did I hope for this.

DAEM. (*kissing her warmly*) :
And receive my greeting also. Oh what a delightful kiss.

TRACH. : I am glad that now your goodness has at length its due reward.

DAEM. :

Take the wallet in, young fellow. You shall keep it under guard.

TRACH. : Look at that old villain Gripus. I congratulate you, friend,
On your luck.

DAEM. (*to* PALAESTRA) : Now to your mother we at once our way must wend.
There are many tests I'm certain she will use which I don't know.
For she's more acquainted with you, and she nursed you long ago.

PAL. :

Let's all go together, father ; for in this we've all a part,
Come, dear Ampelisca, with me.

AMPELISCA : Oh, how glad I am, sweetheart.

(*They all go into the house except* GRIPUS)

GRIP. (*left alone sings a doleful ditty*) :

Oh dear and oh dear.
I'm a Jonah I fear.
Why ever that bag did I find ?
Why didn't I hide it
When once I had spied it
And leave not a vestige behind ?
I was always afraid
Some such game would be played ;
For storms bring bad luck we are told.
They have got it in there,
And have taken my share,

And it's stuffed full of silver and gold.
The best thing for me
As I think you'll agree,
Is to put my old neck in a rope ;
And hang for a day,
Till this pain goes away,
And then I'll feel better I hope.

### Scene V

DAEMONES *leaving the girls and* TRACHALIO *indoors with his wife comes out from his house and soliloquizes.*

DAEMONES :

Ye gods above, is any man more blest !
I of my child am now again possessed.
To pious folk the gods are ever kind :
I've got the girl I never thought to find ;
And as beyond all hope I have her now,
I'll marry her to that young spark, I trow.
He is of gentle birth, and lineage good,
And comes from Athens, and's of my own blood.
I want him summoned here at once from Court.
I've told his man to hurry to the port,
And for his master there to look about.
I wonder why he has not yet come out.
I'll go and look for him.

(*Going towards the door*)

What's that I see ?
My wife and daughter kissing ! Dear, dear me !
My wife has got her arms about her neck :
I really must this silly fervour check.

## Scene VI

DAEMONES *goes to the door of his house and calls to his wife inside*

DAEMONES :

Now, my dear, it's time to put a finish to this kissing bout.
I shall want the victims ready presently ; so cut it out !
Lambs for sacrifice are needed, porkers too ; they must be slain
To our household gods who give us now a household once again.
Please don't keep that valet waiting—Ah he's coming in the nick.

(TRACHALIO *comes bustling out, still speaking to the women inside.*)

TRACHALIO :

I will soon bring Plesidippus. Trust to me : I'll find him quick.

DAEM. (*addressing him*) :

Don't forget about my daughter. To him all the story tell ;
Bid him leave his other business and come quickly.

TRACH. (*pertly*) : *Very well.*

DAEM. : Say I'll give him her in marriage.

TRACH. : *Very well.*

DAEM.: And tell him, too,
That he is my blood-relation, and that I his father knew.

TRACH.: *Very well.*

DAEM.: And hurry quickly.

TRACH.: *Very well.*

DAEM.: Be sure he's here
In good time for dinner, look you.

TRACH.: *Very well*: he shall be there.

DAEM.: All is *well* then?

TRACH.: *Very well*, sir. But I've something too to say.
Don't forget your promise, please sir, that I should be freed to-day.

DAEM. (*coolly*): *Very well.*

TRACH.: Persuade my master that he now my freedom grants.

DAEM.: *Very well.*

TRACH.: And get your daughter. He will give her all she wants.

DAEM.: *Very well.*

TRACH.: And I should like my Ampelisca for my bride,
When I'm free, sir.

DAEM.: *Very well then.*

TRACH.: As you have been gratified,
Please be grateful to your helper.

DAEM.: I say "Very well" to that.

TRACH.: All is *well* then.

DAEM.: *Very well,* friend.
You are getting tit-for-tat.
Off to town now! Hurry quickly, and return at your full speed!

TRACH.: *Very well.* I'll soon be back. Do you prepare all that you need.

DAEM.: *Very well.* The devil, take his "*very wellness*". All I said,
"*Very well, sir,*" was the only answer that the rascal made.

## SCENE VII

*As* TRACHALIO *goes off,* GRIPUS *comes in from the other side and approaches his master*

GRIPUS: When, master, may I have a word with you?

DAEMONES: What do you want?

GRIP.: About that bag, you know.
If you were wise, what God has chosen to send
You'ld keep yourself.

DAEM. : Zounds ! Should I then pretend
That what's another's now belongs to me ?

GRIP. : Did I not find it floating in the sea ?

DAEM. : So much the better for the man who lost it.
But it's not yours because you came across it.

GRIP. : These scruples have of you a poor man made.

DAEM. : O Gripus, Gripus, many a trap is laid
In life for men who see themselves deceived
By those allurements wherein they believed.
For, if a man too greedy snaps the bait,
He finds his greed has snared him—when too late.
But if he caution and due care employ
For many a year his gains he may enjoy.
Methinks your prize will make of you its slave
And take away far more than e'er it gave !
Why should I harbour stolen goods, my man ?
No, no ; that's not at all my sort of plan.
For me to plot with you would be no sense,
Nor will I profit make by false pretence.

GRIP. : Full oft upon the stage such talk I've heard,
And seen the people clap the actor's word
As he advised them and fair precepts showed.
But when they'd gone, each man to his abode,
They straight forgot the lesson.

DAEM. : That will do !
Be quiet, or this insolence you'll rue.
There's nothing here for you ; you need not hope.

GRIP. (*passionately*) :

I pray that all that's tied up in that rope
Silver and gold alike may turn to dust
(*rushes into the house*)

DAEM. (*to the audience*) :

That's what we get when we such rascals trust.
If with our men we're partners for a time
And make ourselves accomplice in some crime,
Thinking to gain rich booty we become
Ourselves the booty, led as captives home—
Now I'll go in, and when my offering's made
I'll bid them haste to get the dinner laid.

## SCENE VIII

TRACHALIO *returns with* PLESIDIPPUS *whom he has brought back from town*

PLESIDIPPUS :

Tell me once again the story, once again repeat it all.
You my freedman and my patron and my father now I call.
Has Palaestra found her father and her mother?

TRACHALIO : Yes, that's true.

PLES. : She's from Athens?

TRACH. : I don't doubt it.

PLES. : Shall we wed?

TRACH. : I fancy so.

PLES. :
Will her father give her to me now at once ?

TRACH. : I *think* he may.

PLES. : And shall I congratulate him on his finding her to-day ?

TRACH. : Yes, I *think* so.

PLES. : And her mother ?

TRACH. : Yes, I *think* so.

PLES. : He agrees.
But why all these "*think so's*", rascal ?

TRACH. : Well I *think* just what you please.

PLES. :
Tell me pray how high your *thinking* rates me?

TRACH. : Oh, I *think* ; that's all.

PLES. :
If you *think* that you're the censor, I am here : you need not call.
Shall I run ?

TRACH. : I *think* you might, sir.

PLES. : Or advance in fashion slow ?

TRACH. : Yes, I *think* that would be better.

PLES. : When I meet her, shall I bow ?

TRACH. : That I *think's* the proper way, sir.

PLES. : Shall I thus her father greet ?

TRACH. : Yes, I *think* so.

PLES. : And her mother ?

TRACH. : Yes, I *think* 'twould be discreet.

PLES. : Well, and shall I kiss her father ?

TRACH. : No, I really *don't think* that.

PLES. : Or her mother ?

TRACH. : I *don't think* so.

PLES. : Or herself ?

TRACH. : No, no ! that's flat !

PLES. : Ah, his " thinking " fit is over. How I wish 'twere " think so " still !

TRACH. : Come along ; you're quite too silly.

PLES. : Take me, patron, where you will.

(*They go into* DAEMONES' *house*)

END OF ACT IV

## ACT V

### SCENE I

LABRAX *returns from town, where he has lost his case, very dejected :*

Damnation ! Damn !
I really am
A most unlucky wight.
I'm quite undone ;
Palaestra's gone ;
I lost my case all right.
We pimps so gay
Are sons, men say,
Of Joy ; and so it's funny
To mock our woes
Whene'er we lose
Our very hard-earned money.
Now I've come here
To teach that dear
Young other thing a lesson ;
She's in the shrine,
And still is mine,
My very last possession.

*Goes to the temple where he supposes* AMPELISCA *to be still sitting*

## Scene II

GRIPUS *comes out from* DAEMONES' *house with a bundle of spits and skewers to polish. He is grumbling to himself, and takes no notice of* LABRAX.

GRIPUS :

Well, 'tis my last day. I shall pass right away if I don't get the wallet, that's flat.

LABRAX :

Did I hear the word " wallet " ? Was it that he did call it ? My heart's going pitter-pat-pat.

GRIP. :

That rascal's set free, and look at poor me ; I have not got even a pound
As reward for it yet, though it was in my net and by my own hands it was found.

LABR. :

By Jove, what I hear makes me prick up my ear.

GRIP. : They shan't take the wallet away.
A notice I'll show with letters like so (*opening his arms*) " If you've lost a big wallet to-day
That in it did hold both silver and gold, friend Gripus can tell you about it ".

LABR. :

He knows quite a lot and can tell who has got my wallet ; I really don't doubt it.

LABRAX *stands hesitating for some moments watching* GRIPUS *scouring the spits. Finally he goes towards him.*

LABR. :
I had better hail the fellow. Heaven help me at this tide !

*A voice is heard from within calling*—" GRIPUS ".

GRIP. :
You may call, but I'm not coming. I am cleaning spits outside.
They are made of rust, not metal, and however hard I rub
They just get more thin and redder in proportion as I scrub.
They're bewitched, that's what's the matter : now the trick I understand.
Look, they're getting thin and thinner, disappearing in my hand.

LABR. (*standing before him*) :
'Morning, sir !

GRIP. : May heaven's blessings on your uncropped head descend.

LABR. : What's your business ?

GRIP. : Cleaning metal.

LABR. : And how are you feeling, friend ?

GRIP. :
What is that to you, young fellow ?
Are you pray a medico ?

LABR. :
No. There are a few more letters in my name, if you would know.

GRIP. : Mendicant, perhaps ?

LABR. : Exactly.

GRIP. : Well, you look it
I must say.

LABR. :
In the storm last night my vessel on the rocks
got cast away,
And I lost all my possessions.

GRIP. : Can you
tell me what they were ?

LABR. :
Well, I left a leather wallet full of gold and silver
there.

GRIP. :
And the contents of the wallet, can you call them
back to mind ?

LABR. :
What's the use when I have lost it ?

GRIP. (*slyly*) : Let's
another topic find
If that does not interest you. But supposing
that I knew
Some one who had found a wallet ? Would that
be of use to you ?

LABR. :
Well, there were eight-hundred dollars fastened
in a leather skin,
And a hundred golden royals in a bag packed
safe within.

GRIP. (*to himself aside*) :
Ah, it was a handsome prize then : there a big reward should be.
Plainly it was this man's wallet.
(*To* GRIPUS)
Please, sir, tell the rest to me.

LABR. :
Twice a hundred pounds in money in a purse. And then a jug
Made of gold, a cup, a beaker, and a tankard, and a mug,
All in solid plate, young fellow.

GRIP. : Golly !
What a lovely lot
You a very handsome fortune in that wallet, sir, had got.

LABR. :
" Had " 's a very cruel word, friend. Once I had, but now I lack.

GRIP. :
What are you prepared to give me if I put you on its track ?
Now, be quick and make your offer.

LABR. : Ten
gold sovereigns.

GRIP. : Oh, rot !

LABR. : Fifteen.

GRIP. : Nonsense !

LABR.: Twenty.

GRIP.: Rubbish!

LABR.: Thirty.

GRIP.: You're
quite off the spot!

LABR.: Well then, forty.

GRIP.: You were getting warmer
now you're cold again.

LABR.: Fifty. That's my highest offer.

GRIP.: You are dreaming
it is plain.

LABR.: Fifty-five then. Take it or leave it!

GRIP.: Once I go,
you know, I've gone.

LABR.: Damn it all, what do you want then?
Name your figure and have done.

GRIP.: Well, two-hundred is my figure. I won't
take a sixpence less
And no more, unless you wish it. Now then, is it
No or Yes?

LABR.: I've no option, I will pay it.

GRIP.: Then let Venus
hear your vow.

LABR.: Anything you like, I'll swear it gladly.

GRIP.: Touch the altar now.

LABR.: Look, I'm touching, you can see me.

GRIP.: Now,
by Venus' holy name.
You must swear.

LABR.: What must I swear to?

GRIP.: Listen: I the oath will frame.

LABR. (*with a wink to the audience*):
Pray dictate it: in this matter I've no need of outside aid.

GRIP.: Grasp the altar.

LABR.: Yes, I've grasped it.

GRIP.: Swear
the money shall be paid
On the day you get the wallet back again.

LABR.: To that I swear.

LABR. and GRIP. (*together*):
Venus, Lady of Cyrene, witness now the oath you hear.
If I find the leather wallet which when I was tempest tossed—
And the gold and silver in it—yesterday at sea I lost,
And recover all its contents, then to Gripus I will pay.

GRIP. (*alone*):
Take me by the hand like this, please, and yourself the next words say.

LABR. (*alone*) :

Then to Gripus—listen, Venus, to this very
solemn oath
I will pay two-hundred sterling—

LABR. and GRIP. (*together*) : Venus, did you hear
us both ?

GRIP. :

Ask that if you break your promise Venus may
all profit take
From your business and a wretched starving
beggar of you make—
Ask that for yourself alone, please.

LABR. : Venus, if I here offend
May all pimps without exception have a lament-
able end.

GRIP. (*aside*) :

They'll have that in any case. But now I'll fetch
my master straight.
When he comes, demand your wallet. You will
not have long to wait.

(*Goes into house.*)

LABR. (*left alone on stage, speaks to the absent* GRIPUS)

Even if I get it back, sir, not one sixpence do I owe
Though my tongue may choose to swear, sir, I
am master, you must know.

## Scene III

GRIPUS *returns with his master, who holds the wallet in his hand*

GRIP. : This way master !

DAEMONES : Where's the pimp gone ?

GRIP. (*calling* LABRAX *forward*) : This way, pimp. The wallet's here.

DAEM. :
Yes, I've got it, I confess it. If it's yours, then have no fear :
It shall be returned *instanter*, with its contents safe and sound.
Here it is !

LABRAX : Good morning, wallet. Glad I am that you've been found.

DAEM. : Is it yours, though ?

LABR. : What a question ! It were mine though Jove above
Were to claim it as his own, sir. Mine indeed ! Oh love-a-dove !

DAEM. :
Everything you'll find uninjured. Just one casket is away
With some trinkets which have helped me to regain my child to-day.

LABR. : Who is she ?

DAEM. : Why, your Palaestra has been proved my child to be.

LABR. : I congratulate you on your well-deserved felicity.

DAEM. : No, not really ?

LABR. : Yes indeed, sir ; and to show you that it's true
You need not pay sixpence for her ; I present her free to you.

DAEM. : That is really most obliging.

LABR. : No, the one obliged is I.

GRIP. (*interrupting, to* LABRAX) :
I say, have you got the wallet.

LABR. : Yes.

GRIP. : Then hurry.

LABR. : Hurry ? Why ?

GRIP. : Hurry up with what you promised.

LABR. : Nay, to you I nothing owe,
And no money need I pay you.

GRIP. : Well, this is a pretty do.
Owe me nothing ?

LABR.: No, of course not.

GRIP.: What about the oath you took?

LABR.: In the past, as in the future, I swear as it suits my book.
Oaths were made for keeping money, not for losing it, my friend.

GRIP.: Give me those two-hundred shiners, perjurer, and make an end.

DAEM.: What is this two-hundred, Gripus?

GRIP.: What he swore that he would give.

LABR.:
Swearing is my favourite pastime, and on perjury I thrive.
Pray, are you a priest, young fellow?

DAEM.: Why to pay did he agree?

GRIP.: If I got him back his wallet, that he swore he'd give to me.

LABR.: Let's refer to arbitration. You will find the contract's void.
My first plea is I'm a minor, and besides fraud was employed.

GRIP.: Let's refer it to my master.

LABR.: I should some one else prefer.

DAEM. : I shan't give you up the wallet if I don't think right, good sir.
Did you promise you would pay him ?

LABR. : I confess it.

DAEM. : To my slave Whatsoever you did promise it is right that I should have.
Don't you think, sir pimp, to play the pimp with me ! It can't be done.

GRIP. (*to* LABRAX) :
You imagined you could cheat me, for you thought I was alone.
And without a friend to help me. Now then pay the cash to me,
And I'll hand it to my master, as the price to set me free.

DAEM. (*to* LABRAX) :
Since I've helped you and you've got now, thanks to me, your bag again—

GRIP. (*interrupting*) :
Thanks to me, not you, my master—

DAEM. : If you're wise, you will refrain From these interruptions, Gripus—then I say you really might
Now repay your obligation.

LABR. : You agree it's mine by right ?

DAEM. :
I should scarcely make petition and allow you thus your case
If I were not in this matter in a very awkward place.

GRIP. :
Good ! The pimp begins to weaken. Soon my freedom I shall have.

DAEM. (*pointing to* GRIPUS) :
He's the man who found your wallet and he is my own bond slave.
I have kept the wallet for you with the money safe and sound.

LABR. : I am very grateful to you. As for that two-hundred pound
Which I offered, please accept it.

GRIP. : *I'm* the man that you should pay.

DAEM. : Quiet, can't you !

GRIP. : You don't help me, but in this your own game play.
Though I've lost the other booty, you shan't cheat me out of this.

DAEM. :
One word more, you'll get a beating.

GRIP. : You can kill me if you wish :
But I never will be quiet if you won't my wrongs redress.

LABR. (*confidentially to* GRIPUS) :
Hold your tongue ; he's working for you.

DAEM. : Pimp, come hither.

LABR. : Yes, sir, yes.

(*They draw away from* GRIPUS.)

GRIP. :
I don't like these secret whispers—
What's their little private game ?

DAEM. :
How much did you buy that girl for ? Ampelisca, that's her name.

LABR. : Fifty Ampelisca cost me.

DAEM. : Would you like me to propose
Something that would bring you profit ?

LABR. : That is just what I should choose.

DAEM. : Well, I'll split the sum you promised.

LABR. : Thank you.

DAEM. : Let the girl go free
And the one half I'll return you. Pay the other half to me.

LABR. : Very well.

DAEM. : And for that hundred Gripus shall his freedom get,
For through him I found my daughter, you your wallet, don't forget.

LABR. :
Excellent ! I'm much obliged, sir.

GRIP. (*in a small plaintive voice*) : How soon, please, shall I be paid.

DAEM. :
I have got the money, Gripus : there is no more to be said.

GRIP. :
I would rather that I had it.

DAEM. : Nay there's nothing here for you.
Don't expect it. And you'll have to let him off his promise too.

GRIP. :
Gad ! I'm done in absolutely now as far as I can see.
I am hanged if there is anything but hanging left for me !
You won't get another chance of cheating me after to-night.

DAEM. :
Will you join us, pimp, at dinner ?

LABR. : Thank you for the kind invite.

DAEM. :

Come in then.

*Suddenly ceasing to be* DAEMONES *and addressing the audience as their old friend the actor manager*

My dear spectators I would ask you too as well,
But our dinner's still a-seeking, if the plain truth I may tell ;
And already I imagine you have been invited out—
Still, if you've enjoyed our playing and will give the usual shout,
Then to have a drink together I invite you all to come,
Women, men, and youths—the children you had better take off home.
Now then, Labrax, now then Gripus ; supper's waiting, stir your stumps.
Gentlemen, your kind applause, please ! That's the way ! What ho, she bumps !

CURTAIN.

# THE CROCK OF GOLD

(AULULARIA)

Translated by

H. LIONEL ROGERS

## Characters of the Play

Lar Familiaris (Prologus), the Angel of the House.

Euclio Senex, Old Skinflint

Staphyla Anus, Mother Bunch

Eunomia Mulier, Mistress Goodbody

Megadorus Senex, Old Trusty

Strobilus Servus, Whirl, a slave

Anthrax Cocus, Pluck
Congrio Cocus, Pike
} cooks

Phrygia Tibicina, Phrygie
Elensium Tibicina, Lucy
} flute-girls

Pythodicus Servus, Dickon, a slave

Lyconides Adulescens, Young Master Lucy

Phaedria Virgo, Fèdre, a young lady

## THE CROCK OF GOLD

*Prologue*: spoken by the LAR FAMILIARIS (old style).

Lest any ask who I may be,
I'll speak withouten mysterye:
The Angel of the House, you see
Me coming out and in.

This is the house that many a year
I inhabit and hold right dear,
For the father's sake of him who here
Now has his home within.

It was his grandsire once besought
Me keep the treasure of gold he brought—
Of gold whereof no man had thought;
He brought it secretly.

He buried it right in the fire's heart,
And worshipped me to do my part,
And keep it for him, by mine art;
So miserly was he!

Yea, when he died, he was wonder fain
Never to telle his own son plain;
Withouten wealth he would have him lain,
Ere that treasure reveal.

He left that son a plot of land,
No muckle measure, you understand;
Wherefrom with sorrow of heart and hand,
A pyttance he might steal.

When he was dead who trusted me
That gold to keep, I 'gan to see
If higher honour hadde he
Than his good sire had shown.

But he less and less hartelye
Did love and honours multiplye,
And therefore he too came to die,
And then I gat mine own.

He left behind his very son,
The same that hath his house hereon,
Where sire and grandsire both have done,
And he hath daughter one.

She pays me wine and frankincense,
Doth daily coronals dispense;
The gold, for honour gotten thence,
Shall here find Euclio

For her a young man of high place
I' the way of love did once enlace;
He knows the maid of his embrace,
But she doth not him know;

Nor doth her father know her fall.
To-day I'll make yon old man call
Here for a wife to grace his hall:
I'll do it for her sake,

That easier she may be wed
To her lover, whom to her bed
At Ceres' Feast she welcomed,
And not the old man take

Who is the Uncle of the boy.
But Euclio shouts—it is his joy !—
Inside our house he doth annoy
Old Staphyla his maid ;

And thrust her forth lest she beware
Of his secret, for I declare
He means his gold to visit, where
In safe-keeping 'tis laid.

## ACT I

*A street in Athens with houses of* EUCLIO *and* MEGADORUS *and the Temple of Faith in front of which stands an altar. The door of* EUCLIO'S *house is opened hurriedly and* STAPHYLA *rushes out followed by* EUCLIO *vociferating.*

EUC.: Come out, I say, come out; I swear
Hence out you must Miss Pry and Stare,
"With eyghen starting like a hare . . ."

STAPH.: Why give poor me a lashing?

EUC.: To make you in dead earnest poor:
Bad life for a bad girl to ensure!

STAPH.: Why have you thrust me from your door?

EUC.: Am I your crop for thrashing
To answer you? Get back, I say;
Back from the door; there, that's the way!
Look at the gait she's going! Pray
D'ye know what you deserve?
If I get cane or crop in hand
To-day your snail-steps I'll expand.

STAPH.: God to the gallows me command
Ere thus with you I'll serve.

EUC.: You miserable mumbling mule!
I'll dig those eyes of yours out, fool;
Then watch what I am doing you'll
No longer have the power.
Away at once, away!

(*He pushes her from the door.*)

STAPH. (*in consternation*): Away?

EUC.: Hi! Stop there! Marry, if you stray
A nail's breadth or a finger's play
From that spot where you cower;
If you look back till I say look,
Gad, straightway you'll be brought to book
Upon the cross; a curster cook
I ne'er saw live or buried.
I foully fear her but too well,
Lest on the sly she cast a spell
When I am off my guard, and smell
My gold out where 'ts interrèd.
Her skull has eyes too, woe betid:
I'll see if Gold is where 'twas hid;
To wretchednesse am I worried
In many and many a way.

(*He goes into his house.*)

STAPH.: By Heaven! I cannot even guess
What wicked curse, what foul madness
Has fallen on my master; yes,
Ten times each several day
He often thrusts poor me outside.

God knows what fantasies bestride
The man's imagination ; wide
Awake whole nights he'll lie,
Then like a limping cobbler sits
Whole days at home. How hide his fits
From Master's daughter tasks my wits—
Her travail-time draws nigh—
There's nothing better left for me
Than make myself a long long T,
And noose my neck and so get free ;
That way my fancies ride.

EUC. (*re-enters*) :

My mind's as clear as a new pin.
Now that I've seen all safe within,
I come forth ; you, girl, get you in,
Look after all inside.

STAPH. : Look after all inside ? Oh dear !
Lest any steal the house, you fear ;
No other swag for thieves is here
But emptiness and spid-
-Ers

EUC. (*interrupting*) :

Ugh ! You double-dyed mandrake,
I wonder Heaven does not make
Me millionaire for your sweet sake.
I want my spiders spied !

I suffer—granted ! and I'm poor ;
What the gods give I take, no more !
Get you within ; and bar the door ;
I'm here, and to your sorrow

You'll let a stranger in the house.
If any ask for fire, dowse
The glim, lest there remain a louse
Of cause for him to borrow.
A spark of fire put out straightway;
If any ask for water, say
That all our water's run away.
The pestle and the mortar
Knife, axe, and all the gear to use
That neighbours always ask, refuse;
Thieves came and stole them your excuse;
For No Man nor his daughter
Into my house will I have shown
When I'm away and you're alone.
Nay, e'en were Lucky Fortune blown
Our way, mind, no admittance!

STAPH.: Gad, she herself, I think takes care
About admittance, for nowhere
Has she once come to our house.

EUC.: There,
Shut up, and take your quittance!

STAPH.: I'm mum, and off.
(*Goes into the house.*)

EUC. (*pursuing her*): And fasten, pray,
The doors, and double-lock; I'll stay.
(*Door shuts.*)
I'm torn in two because away
I must from home unwilling

But where my duty lies I know;
On us our Master Oddfellow
Has promised largess to bestow,
  On every man a shilling;
If I learn that and make no claim,
What will our Fellows think my game?
That I have siller stored at hame!
  For likely it is not
That one who's poor should pout the lip
In scorn of any twopenny tip—
Why spite my pains from partnership
  To hide it,—from the lot,—
All seem to know, and greet me now
More kindly than they used to bow;
Come up, stop, shake hands, ask me how
  I am, I do, and what?
Still, now I'll go where I set out,
And after that turn right about,
And run back home as quick as—gout!
  That is, just like a shot!

CURTAIN

## ACT II

*Enter, from the house of* MEGADORUS, EUNOMIA, *and* MEGADORUS.

EUN.: Brother, I'ld have you think that I
Am saying this in your and my
Best interest, right sisterly,
Though this I grant whatever,
That hateful are we women held,
Rightly right talkative, and seld-
-Om is the legend now dispell'd,
Dumb, women found are never!
But, brother, think this one thing true,
To me you're nearest, I to you;
And so 'tis right in all we do
We counsel one another,
Advising each the other's good,
I you, you me, and neither should
Aught muffle, or in panick hood,
Lest sister or lest brother
Share shares alike and on all fours.
That's why I've drawn you out of doors
To talk with you of you and yours
Here privately, aloof

MEG.: Give me your hand, best woman . . .

EUN.: Pray,
Where, and who's that?

MEG.: You!

EUN.: So you say.

MEG.: If you say No, then I say Nay.

EUN.: 'Gainst lies you should be proof.
No woman can be picked out best;
But A than B's a greater pest.

MEG.: Agreed! On that 'tmust be confest
Oppose you shall I never.

EUN.: 'Slove, pay me heed.

MEG.: I'm yours to use,
Or bid do anything you choose

EUN.: What I think best for you to do 's
The advice I come to

MEG.: Ever
Your usual doings.

EUN.: Deeds I want

MEG.: But, sister, what?

EUN.: To make me aunt
I'ld have you take . . .

MEG.: The gods so grant!

EUN.: A wife, your boon and blessing!

MEG.: Oh! murder!

EUN.: Why?

MEG.: You rack my brains;
Your tongue, my sister, rocks it rains.

EUN.: Do as your sister bids you.

MEG.: Pains
I'll take to please, confessing . . .

EUN. (*interrupting*):
To gain this leads, to your gain.

MEG.: 'Sdeath,
I'd rather draw my latest breath.
But if you've found a girl that saith
" I'll come to you to-morrow
The next day to be carried out
To burial; then, yes, no doubt
Your offer, sister, I'd not flout,
And you might bake-meats borrow
To furnish forth the wedding-feast.

EUN.: Huge, brother, is her dower. The priest
Will give you one who's old, at least
A bride of middle age.
Bid me to ask her, and I'll ask!

MEG.: You'ld burke my questioning?

EUN.: Nay, task
Your wits with asking—ask and ask!

MEG.: Then read this riddle sage!
Suppose our middle-aged Benedick
His Beatrice by chance makes quick
With child, what will they call their chick
But Posthumus—Belated?

Therefore, dear sister, I'll not shirk
The task that's mine, your dirty work
I'll lighten and unload. They irk
My spirit these inflated
Expenses, slaves of men that make,
For God and our forefathers' sake
I'm rich enough such things to take
At their true value—naught!
Big business, dowries debonair,
Claques, partisans, and purple wear,
Commands, and ivory carrying-chair . . .

EUN. (*interrupting*):
Pray let us know whose daught-
-Er is it you would wed.

MEG.: You know
Our poor old neighbour Euclio?

EUN.: Worthy but not worth much, I trow.

MEG.: I want his daughter's hand.
Don't argue, sister, I agree
She's poor; I like her poverty!

EUN.: God help you!

MEG.: That's my litany.

EUN.: Well, I'm at your command.

MEG.: Farewell!

EUN.: The same to you.
(*She goes.*)

MEG.: I'll go.
And call on neighbour Euclio.
If he's at home.
(*Sees* EUCLIO.)
Who's that? Hullo!
Just home from No Man's Land!

EUC.: Foretold my heart to go was vain
When forth I fared; so, far from fain
I went off, for no parischèn
Came, no Master of Domès,
Whose duty 'twas to parcel out
The money; quick march, right-about,
I hasten home; for I'm without,
My heart with you at home is.

MEG.: Good speed you ever, Euclio;
Good luck go, too, where e'er you go!

EUC.: God's blessing light on you also!

MEG.: How do you? To your pleasure?

EUC. (*turning aside*):
Not random is't when rich to poor
Speak soft; yon man the possessor
Of that gold knows me, and therefore
Is soft-tongued out of measure.

MEG.: You're well, you say?

EUC.: For money, no!

MEG.: Gad, if your heart's all right, you know,
To husband life you've quite enow.

EUC. (*aside*): Marry, it's plain as spyin'
The old wife unto him has told
The hidden secret of my gold!
I'll slit her tongue for overbold,
And gouge out both her eyen.

MEG.: Why mutter to yourself alone?

EUC.: My poverty it is I moan,
Who have a virgin fully grown,
A daughter without dower,
Unmarketable; nay, I've none
That I can palm her off upon.

MEG.: Hush, be of good cheer! Here is one;
I'll help with all my power.
Speak; if you've any need, command.

EUC. (*aside*):
With him a promise spells demand,
Agape to gobble gold, one hand
Shows bread, stones holds the other.
I trust no man who rich to poor
Is blandly bountiful, and more;
Where kindness yokes the coach and four,
Follows a load of bother!
I know those limpets that but touch
A thing, and hold it in their clutch.

MEG.: Pay heed to me, I don't ask much
If, Euclio, you count
Worth while the thing I'd like to call
Our common goods . . .

EUC. (*aside*) : Odds funeral!
He's hooked inside my gold and all,
And now the whole amount
He wants to bargain for, I know.
But to my house meanwhile I'll go
(*He turns to go.*)

MEG. : Wherever are you going?

EUC. : Oh!
I'll join you in a minute;
There's that at home that I must see!
(*Goes in.*)

MEG. : When I've mentioned his girl, that he
May her affiance unto me,
He'll think there's nothing in it!
There's none to-day from poverty
More parsimonious than he.

EUC. (*returning*) :
The goods are safe! God keepeth me;
For safe's the thing not minish'd.
Too fearful was I of evil;
Before I went in I was ill.
Now, Megadorus, what's your will?
I'm back, my business finish'd.

MEG. : Thank you. Please, what I ask as well
Don't let it vex you to forthtell.

EUC. : Provided you don't ask me sell
What I should not like told!

MEG.: What think you of my breed at birth?

EUC.: Good!

MEG.: Credit?

EUC.: Good!

MEG.: My life on earth?

EUC.: I don't say that it's nothing worth.

MEG.: Years?

EUC.: Full of years . . . and gold!
(*Sotto voce.*)

MEG.: For my part I have thought and think
Your armour is without a kink
Of knavish knavery.

EUC. (*aside*): There's the stink
Of gold!
(*To* MEGADORUS.)
Your will with me?

MEG.: Since you know me and I know you,
May that bless us and bless her too!
Your daughter for my wife I woo;
Then promise that shall be.

EUC.: O Megadorus, what you do
Is deed that is not worthy you.
A poor man and a harmless too
That you and yours should laugh at.
By word and deed I've not deserved
To be served by you as I am served.

MEG.: Gad, from what's meet I have not swerved,
To laugh at you or chaff at!

EUC. (*sharply*):
How then d'ye woo my girl for wife?

MEG.: That each by other's pruning-knife
May better find his several life.

EUC.: This is the thought that I mind;
You're rich, and venturesome for sure,
While I am poorest of the poor.
Now if my ship to yours I moor,
This fable comes to my mind.
You are the ox and I'm the ass;
When yoked with you I can't compass
The burden by your side, alas!
Ass-like in mud I wallow.
You ox-like think no more of me
Than if I'd never come to be;
And ever harsher find I thee;
My kind me mock and follow!
I'd nowhere find sure stable-ing
If there should be a sundering,
For ass would tear me with biting,
Or toss me to perdition.
That's the great risk of changing caste!

MEG.: The nearer then to noble passed.
In meanness, the more sure to last!
Accept then my condition;
Hearken: affiance her to me.

EUC.: But I've no dower to give to thee.

MEG.: She's dowered enough if so she be
Well manner'd.

EUC.: One word pardon;
Don't think that I've found treasure-trove.

MEG.: All right! Betrothe her . . .

EUC. (*in a panic*): Done! By Jove
I'm lost.

MEG.: What's up?

EUC. (*in agony*): That sound, that move,
Like iron.

MEG. (*innocently*): In my garden
I bade them dig . . .

(EUCLIO *dashes off.*)

but where's my man?
He's gone and I'm no wiser than
Before, but scorn'd since I began
To let him see I'm needing
His friendship. Just our human way!
If Rich the Poor man's favour pray,
The Poor's afraid to meet him; yea,
His fear success impeding.
Then when the chance is gone, too late
The wretch begins to expostulate.

EUC. (*storming*) :

If I don't tear your tongue out straight,
Or bid another do it,
I bid, command, and inculcate
That you should at the market-rate
Sell me to someone to castrate ;
Or, marry, you shall rue it !

MEG. : I see you think me just the sort
Of whose old age you can make sport—
My innocent age . . .

EUC. : I'm not ; in short
I tell you, Megadorus,
I could not do it if I tried.

MEG. : What ? you still promise me my bride ?

EUC. : Yes, with the dowry specified.

MEG. : You promise ?

EUC. : Promise.

MEG. : Glorious !
God bless . . .

EUC. : Yes, yes, forget it not
That we're agreed that not a jot
Of dowry brings my girl, no " dot ".

MEG. : No dowry ; I remember.

EUC. : I know the way you people must
Muddle things up to suit your lust
Till promises are but piecrust.

MEG.: I'll not, if you'll December
With April wed this very day.

EUC.: Egad, that is the perfect way.

MEG.: I'll go then and make ready. Pray,
Your bidding?

EUC.: Go with blessing.

MEG.: Quick, boy, to market follow me.
(*Goes off with slave.*

EUC.: Gone? Gad, the power of money! H
Is bent on this affinity,
I'm sure, my treasure guessing.
Where are you who have blather'd no
To neighbours all that I endow
My daughter with a dowry?
(*Shouting thro' the door*
Cow!
D'ye hear me call inside?
Make haste, you Staphyla, wash whit
My plates, my daughter have I plight-
-Ed Megadorus; and to-night
I'll give him her for bride

STAPH.: The Saints protect! It can't be done
It's far too sudden.

EUC.: Peace, begone!
See that all's right by set of sun
When I'm home from the forum
And bolt the door; I'll soon be here.

STAPH.: What shall I do? Destruction's near
For me and for my mistress dear.
To all the cockalorum
Her childbirth known, my chastisement!
What erst was hid must now find vent.
I'll in on master's will intent,
Lest grisly grief my jorum.

CURTAIN

Strob. : Now Master has provision made,
Hired cooks and flute-girls in the Arcad
On me injunction has he laid
To bifurcate the conger.

Congrio : This Conger plain and manifest,
I say, you'll not share with the rest ;
Sent somewhere whole I'll do my bes

Anthrax : But stew'd you'll linger longer !

Con. : Quite otherwise was my intent ;
My words meant not the thing you mean

Str. : But Master's on his marriage bent
To-day . . .

Anth. : Whose bloomin' daughter

Str. : His neighbour Euclio's next door here
To him he's ordered half the cheer
Be given,—one cook, one flute-player.

Anth. : 'Alf 'ere, 'alf 'ome, then, sorter ?

Str. : Yes.

Anth. : What ! Can't Old-un on his ow
'Er weddin' breakfast stand ?

Str. : Ochone !

Anth. : Wot's up ?

STR. : Draw blood from such a stone ?
To ask it is provoking !

ANTH. : D'yer say so ?

CONG. : So ?

STR. : Just think it out ;
To gods and men one long loud shout
" He's plucked ! His goods are up the spout ! "
If once his chimney's smoking.
Why, when he goes to sleep he'll tie
The bellows round his throat.

ANTH. : But why ?

STR. : Lest he should waste his breath thereby
When in his bed he's blinking.

ANTH. : His lower throat too does he stuff ?

STR. : Why ?

ANTH. : Lest in sleep he lose a puff

STR. : In our tales trust for trust's enough !

ANTH. : That's just the way I'm thinking.

STR. : He weeps—you'll not believe such bosh,
Until he needs a mackintosh,
At waste of water, if he wash.

ANTH. : He *is* a man of talent !
But golden talent fine and large
D'yer think we'd beg from " dear old Jarge ? "
To win both on us our discharge,
And make us each a gallant ?

STR.: Beg hunger from him, and you'll fail
The manicurist clips his nail,
He comes along and in a pail
He picks up every paring!

ANTH.: Blimey! the bloke wot you describe
Comes of a bloomin' stingy tribe.

STR.: D'yer think the slipper galls his kibe
And that he's really sparing?
A kite once carried off his pease;
Off to the Court of Common Pleas
To give the Magistrate no peace
Our fellow went complaining!
And there began with plea and plaint
Demanding that by every saint
The guilty kite he might attaint!
You'd think that it was raining
Such tales if I had time . . . (*to the cooks*) Of you
Which has the lighter hand? Speak true!

ANTH.: Me! I'm by far the better!

STROB.: Pooh!
At cooking not at stealing.

ANTH.: Yes, cooking.

STR.: You?

CONG.: I'm him you seek

ANTH.: I'm cook; 'e goes out by the week!

CONG.: S.N.E.A.K.

ANTH.: Sneak! Sneak! Sneak!

STROB.: Shut up now! Stop that squealing!
And take this lamb, the fatter one;
And off inside our mansion.

ANTH.: Done!

STR.: With this one, Congrio, thither run.
And you with Congrio follow.
The rest of you this way to us.

CONG.: Your ruling's most iniquitous;
They've got the fatter lamb.

STR.: Don't fuss!
Your girl shall beat his hollow.
Come, Phrygie, off you go with him;
But, Lucy, in to us; look slim!

CONG.: O Strobilus, it's you that's slim!
Send me to this old miser?
Where I may ask until I'm hoarse
Sooner than get a drop of sauce.

STR.: Tickle your palate! It's too coarse,
Ungrateful gormandiser!

CONG.: How's that?

STR.: You ask? First over there
You'll have no crowd, but whatsoe'er
You want to use from home you'll bear,
No waste of time in calling.
Here we've great crowds, a household great,
Gold, furniture, clothes, silver-plate;

And anything that's missing straight
"The cooks have robb'd" they're bawling!
"Arrest them, bind them, beat them well
Bury them in the deepest cell!
While, if there's nothing you can sneak,
Hands off you won't find hard.
There none of these things will you feel,
For you have nothing there to steal.
Then follow.

CONG.: Right! For woe or weal
(*Goes in.*)

STR. (*calling* STAPHYLA):
Hi! leave the door unbarr'd,
And out!

STAPH.: Who calls?

STR.: Tis Strobilus.

STAPH.: And what on earth d'ye want with us?

STROB.: Here's cook, flute-girl, and fowl to truss
And take in for the wedding.
(*Pointing.*)
A gift from him to him in fine.

STAPH.: A wedding-feast for Proserpine!

STROB.: Why?

STAPH.: Cos they've brought with them no wine.

STROB.: It's light 'twill soon be shedding,
When he comes home.

STAPH. (*grumbling*): We've got no wood.

STROB.: No beams?

STAPH.: Of course.

STROB.: Well, they're as good;
No need to cadge.

STAPH. (*to* CONGRIO): You devil's brood,
Uncleansed by fires of Hell,
Although you're devotee of fire,
For supper's sake or for your hire,
To burn our house down don't desire;
That's asking for it!

CONG.: Well,
I'm not a-hasking!

STR.: In with them!
Yes, mind you follow me, you limb
(*They go in.*)

PYTHODICUS:

Keep busy! In the interim
I'll see what cooks are doing.
Gad, looking after them to-day
Is my chief care. The only way
Is—make them down the cellar stay
Thence to draw up their stewing.
But if they gobble down the mess
They cook, then are they supperless
In upper circles; supper'd, yes,
Only the lower region.
But here I'm wasting words, as though

I'd nothing else on earth to do,
When in the house roam to and fro
Grim gobblins in their legions.

(*Goes in.*)

EUC.: Wishing to satisfy my heart
That well I play a father's part
At Phaedra's wedding, I went to Mart,
And there I asked for salmon
They showed them . . . dear! Lamb
dear, dear beef!
Veal, game, pork . . . all were dear;
and chief
Because I'd not the cash; in brief
Without the needful mammon
I came back in a fury here;
Thus every dirty profiteer
I taught with me to interfere;
Then on the way 'gan reason.
If you launch out on holiday,
In working times to want you may
Be driven, if you don't display
Economy in season.
Thus schooling heart and belly too
Mind came to take my point of view,
That I should make as little do
As possible for spending
On Phaedra's wedding: so I got
A pinch of incense, and this lot
Of flowers to offer as mascot,
To make a happy ending.

Hullo! is't my house open wide?
And all that hellish din inside?
To rob poor me all these allied?

CONG. (*from within*):

Fetch, if you can, a larger
Pot from near by; this is too small;
It cannot nearly hold it all.

EUC.: Odds bodkins! that's my funeral!
My head's upon that charger!
They bag my gold; a pot they seek;
Unless I double double quick
Inside! O God, avenge the weak,
And help me ere I'm done in!
Shoot those that have my treasury raided;
Others in like case you have aided;
Ere safe and strong-room be invaded,
Stay not, O Euclio, run in!

ANTH. (*from* M.'s *house*):

You strip the fish of scales, Dromo;
With all your might, Machaerio,
Bone lampreys, eels; while I too go
To beg a bread-pan thence
From Congrio next door. And you
Shave yonder cockadoodledoo
Than shaveling mountebank more smooth
That is, if you've the sense.
But what's this rising hullabaloo

Next door? The cooks their duty do!
I'll run indoors lest our way too
Spread equal turbulence.

CONG. (*rushing out of* EUCLIO'S *house in great excitement*):

Friends, Romans, Countrymen, citizens, strangers,
Clear every broadway, make room to fly dangers;
Naught but a bruise am I, beat to a frazzle,
Made skittle-alley by old Razzle-Dazzle!
Never for Bedlamite cooked I in Bedlam;
Never so soundly did any my head lam;
Ne'er such a largess of wood saw I given;
All of us out cudgel-laden are driven,
Me and my pupils. Alas! but I'm distraught!
(*Sees* EUCLIO.)
Following? I'll better this lesson he's taught!

EUC.: Stop, stop him; come back; where d'ye run?

CONG.: Why call me back, (*aside*) old Simpleton?

EUC.: I'll lodge a pro-se-cu-ti-on
'Gainst you with some J.P.

CONG.: Wherefore?

EUC.: For theft. You've got a knife.

CONG.: Cook's right!

EUC.: For contumely and strife.

CONG.: 'Twas crime I did not take your life,
To that I will agree.

EUC.: You are the biggest rogue unhung;
I'd gladly do you wilful wrong.

CONG.: That's patent, tho' you hold your tongue,
The blows themselves are speaking.
Whipt softer than a cit am I.
Touch me, you beggar, will you? Why?

EUC.: You ask, when less then Equity
Allows me you are squeaking!

CONG.: Let be, or on your own head be't
If I've the sense and eyes to see't

EUC.: Gad, how you'll be hereafter beat
Who knows? I know you feel!
What business in my absence had
You in my house, unless I bade
I'd like to know.

CONG.: Shut up, my lad;
I'm come to cook the meal.

EUC.: But what the mischief do you care
If raw or cooked my breakfast-fare?
Are you my keeper?

CONG.: Tell me square,
May I or may I not cook
The supper here?

EUC. : I'd fain be sure
My things were safe behind my door.

CONG. : The things I've added to your store
Once safe home I would not look
For yours ; I'd be contented.

EUC. : Oh !
Don't teach your grandmother ; I
*know !*

CONG. : Why stop me cooking supper though ?
I've not gainsaid your wishes.

EUC. : More questions, knave ? when every nook
Within my house and rooms you shook.
Your business if you'd not forsook,
Your kitchen-fire and dishes,
Your head would not be broken now.
It served you right. But hear my vow :
Nearer that door than I allow
Come, and I'll make you suffer.
You know my purpose.
(*He turns to go.*)

CONG. : Where's he gone ?
Come back. So help me Little John,
Unless you bid them hereupon
Give back my pots, old buffer
I'll make things piping hot ! I fear,
My evil genius brought me here :
Cash hired me ; I must commandeer
If I'm to pay the Leech.

EUC. (*hugging his Pot*) :

This shall go with me when I go ;
I'll take it with me ; trust to so
Great dangers such a treasure, no !
So, in with all and each,
Cooks, flute girls, this way ; take inside
Your herd of hirelings ; glut your pride
With fuss and flurry, boiled and fried.

CONG. : Too late ! My skull you've split.

EUC. : Take out a writ, but do not be
A nuisance ; in to cookery,
Or out to Hell.

CONG. : To hell with thee !
(*He goes in.*)

EUC. : Gone ! Lord, too daring for us
When poor with rich begins to deal.
He sent his cooks in here to steal
Pretending it was for my weal,
My tempter, Megadorus.
Concordantly the Doodledoo—
Old Staphyla's familiar, who
Proved pretty nearly pirate too—
Where this my Pot was hidden
Began to scrabble with his claws
All round about. Suspicion gnaws
My breast. You see ; I grip my tawse
And slay him on his midden !
A thief caught en flagrant délit.
I think cook promised cock a fee

If 'twas unearthed. Their snickersne
I struck out of their hand!
Hullo! there's Megadorus my
Near neighbour back from Market, I
Should never dare to pass him by,
But here to talk must stand.

MEG.: About this match my little plan
I've told to many and many a man;
They eulogize Miss Euclio;
"How clever and how cute, you know!"
For if the other millionaires
Their poorer brethren's daughters dar
To take as wives undower'd home,
I think the State would soon become
A much much more harmonious State
And we enjoy less bitter hate,
And wives fear more than now they fea
Adversity, to us less *dear*—
The greatest number's greatest good,
But 'gainst the greedy Few a feud,
Whose greedy souls and greedy maw
Bounds neither Guardian nor Law.
To that contention I reply;
To wed the wealthy wherefore sigh
Our dowried daughters, when the poo
Of that same privilege are sure?
Nay, let them wed whoever woo,
Without their dowry wedding too;
For dowry then they would beget
Far better ways than now they get.

Next mules, than horses costlier,
Than geldings French I'd make
cheaper . . .

EUC. (*aside*) :

Lord love you, how I love to hear
His pretty hymn to all that's *near !*

MEG. : No wife would say 'Tis very clear ;
I brought much bigger dower, dear,
Than all your fortune ; so 'tis fair
You give me gold and purple-wear,
Maids, mules, mule-drivers, grooms to
spare
Errand-boys and a carriage ?

EUC. : How well he's probed the ways of wives !
I'd like to set him o'er their lives ;
There'd be no drones within our hives,
If he were Lord of Marriage !

MEG. : Where e'er you turn, at every door
See loads and loads of lorries, more
Than in the country bring your store
When you are there week-ending.
But that's fine weather, that's "Set
Fair",
When this with that and here with there
You match : for She is past compare
When really out for spending !
There goldsmith, woolner, cleaner stand,
And those who dye at her command
Flame, violet, canary, and
The crowning mercy—mallow !

Mongers of muffs and lingerie,
Purveyors of passementerie,
The Linen-Weavers' Company
Send agents cute and callow.
Shoe-manufacturers—a rogue
For every slipper, pump, or brogue,
And cross-legg'd cobblers with thei
vogue
Of balsam-scented leather.
Call cleaners, wardrobe-dealers call;
Stay-makers stay, stay makers all
Of girdles shaped for stout or small.
You pack them off together;
They slink away; new hundreds call
You've beggars waiting in your Hall,
Weavers of fringes and fal-lal,
Or chapman with his casket.
"Come in; take that" (*his cash*). Yo
think
You're rid of them, when in there slin
Fresh brewers of some saffron-stink,
Some money-tout to ask it.

EUC.: I'd ask him; but, if I appear,
He'd stop his Wise Wives' Tale, I fear
And therefore I'll not interfere

MEG.: When all the bills are paid
For every kind of trumpery trash,
At last a Veteran comes, begs cash;
Bankwards He goes in his calash
And has his balance made

Fasting waits Tommy, hopes for luck;
But when the balance has been struck,
'Tis hope deferr'd as well as tuck,
For overdrawn is he.
These and a thousand like to these
Intolerable extravagances
Are fortune's disadvantages.
The wife undower'd, she
Is subject to her husband's power.
By wrong and ruin every hour
He's outraged by a wife with dower . . .
Hullo! there's Euclio!
What are you up to?

EUC.: Every word
I've drunk in gladly.

MEG.: Have you heard?

EUC.: From A to Z.
If you'd incurr'd

MEG.: Expenditure more splendid
To wed your girl, 'twere better done
At least in my opinion

EUC.: Splendour to wealth suit every one,
And Show to what's expended!
Let those who have their origin
Remember; those whose means are thin,
Like mine, prepare a spread within
No better than they're rated.

MEG.: God grant you get the more you crave
And may He what you have now save

EUC. (*aside*):
I do not like that "what you have"
The old woman has prated.
He knows as well as I my station,

MEG.: Withdraw from our deliberation?

EUC.: How shall I launch my accusation?

MEG.: What?

EUC.: Can you ask me what?
When every nook beneath my eaves,
Alas the day! you've filled with thieves
Sent scores of cooks with scores o
sleeves
A Heathen Chinee lot!
If Argus, who was Juno's eye
Set to keep Jove in custody,
Should watch them, it were all-my-eye
For keep them he would not.
Besides a flute-player, a quean
Who just by drinking in between
Would drain of wine the Fount Piren
In its Corinthian Grot.
Fish for a garrison enow . . .

MEG.: I sent a lamb

EUC.: Than which, I trow,
No beast was ever more highbrow

MEG.: How can a beast be high-
-Brow?

EUC.: When it's skin and bones, no more;
With cast of thought all sicklied o'er,
In sunlight to its living core
Like Chinese Lamp transparent!

MEG.: I hired him to be slaughter'd.

EUC.: Then
You'd best with th' undertaker's men
Make contract for his funeral, when
His death is so apparent!

MEG.: A glass with you, friend Euclio.

EUC.: I've nothing fit to drink, you know.

MEG.: A cask of crusted I will go
And have from my house brought.

EUC.: No thanks; water I mean to swill.

MEG.: But wet your whistle well I will
Who mean to quaff the crystal rill.

EUC. (*aside*):

I think his drift I've caught:
To make me drunk is what he's at,
And then to change the habitat
Of what I hold here, Caveat!
I'll hide it otherwise
I'll see that both alike are vain,
Trouble and wine.

MEG.: Well now, I'd fain,
Unless you want me, purge my stain
Before the sacrifice.

(*Goes in to his house.*)

EUC. (*holding his Pot to his breast*):

You've many for your life that lust,
You and the Gold that is your trust;
This is the thing that do I must,
Take you to Faith—her Fane.

(*To Faith's Statue.*)

Faith, I know thee, and thou knowest
me
Change not, if I trust this to thee,
Relying on thy fealty;
But faithful, Faith, remain.

STROB.: The service of a serviceable servant is to do
The things that I am doing; not a halt or how dye do
Make of every master's order; for the servant who would serve
To his master's satisfaction from his duty must not swerve.
For his master get up early, for himself should get up late;
If he slumber he must slumber, as remembering his state;
If like me he serve a master who is master'd by his love
'Tis his duty as a servant not to give a gentle shove
On the side that he is heeling, but to haul until he right,
Just as boys at swimming-lessons, in a devil of a fright,
Put on wicker floats to ease them in the motion of their limbs,
So the serviceable servant is the buoy for lover's whims,
That above the stormy waters keeps afloat his master's head
Lest he tumble to perdition like a very sounding lead.

He must learn his master's orders, read
the meaning of a frown,
And execute them faster than the
fastest Four in town.
If to this he pay attention, cat-'o-nine-
tails will he miss,
Nor himself rub up the fetters till they
shine away his bliss.
Now my Master, who loves Euclio
the Poor man's daughter, he
Has been told to Megadorus here she's
wedded wife to be;
So he's sent me here a scouting that in
whatsoe'er's afoot
He may have his proper footing. On
this altar I'll take root,
So that no one may suspect me of inten-
tions sinister,
While their comings and their goings
have in me an arbiter.

EUC. (*coming out of the Temple*):

Be sure now, Faith, you don't disclose
My gold is there; I don't suppose
That any one will have the nose
To scent what's so well hidden.
Egad he'd get a pretty prey
If anyone should find to-day
The Pot gold-laden. Faith, I pray,
Prevent it, as you're bidden.

And now I'll wash before I pay
Duty to God, and not delay
My neighbour's fetching straight away
  And marrying my daughter.
Mind, Faith, again and yet again
I get my Pot back safe ; nor vain
My trust to Faith, Faith's Grot and Fane
  Gold of the finest water.

(*Goes to his house.*)

STROB. : Good heavens, what a wickedness !
I hear this naughty knave confess
That in Faith's Fane he's hiding, yes,
  A Pot with fine gold laden.
I pray you, Faith, don't you be more
Faithful to him than to me, for
He must be the progenitor
  Of her, my Master's maiden.
I'll go inside, the Fane ransack.
If haply ere the man come back
I find the Gold ; found, pots of sack
  Full bumpers I will fill ;
Yes fill for you, but drink for me—
A mutual sacrifice !

(*Goes into the Temple.*)

EUC. : You see
Not idle was the prophecy
  Croaked by the Bird of Ill
Upon my left hand. Nay, I saw ;

He scratched the earth up with his claw,
Then from his raven throat did caw.
My pulse began to play
Within my breast the Tumbler's part,
And to my mouth 'gan leap my heart
Straightway he gave me such a start!
From running I must stay.
Out, out, old mole, canst work so fast
I' the earth, nor e'er thy hill upcast?
(*Sees* STROBILUS.)
Nay, now that thou art seen at last,
Thou diest for all thy juggling!
In woeful wise I'll welcome thee!

STROB.: Come, what hast thou to do with me,
Old villain? On what cursed tree
Art now for thy sins struggling?
Why down me, drag me, wherefore lash?

EUC.: Most thrashiest I e'er did thrash,
Will nothing yet thy questions squash,
Thou base, nay treble thief!

STROB.: What, prithee, stole I?

EUC.: Please give here . . .

STROB.: What wilt thou that I give?

EUC.: Dost speer?

STROB.: I've not thee robb'd.

EUC.: *The* robb'd—let's hear.
Ah! would you?

STROB.: What?
EUC.: Your sheaf
You cannot carry.
STROB.: What?
EUC.: Give *back* . . .
STROB.: Gad, that's your usual gift . . . to smack!
EUC.: Please give it back, and stow your crack
No trifle's neath my word.
STROB.: Give back what? Call a spade a spade:
Hands upon nothing have I laid.
EUC.: Hands up!
STROB.: I've done as I was bade
EUC.: Both hands!
STROB.: There!
EUC.: Now the third!
STROB.: Fogs, frenzy-fits, and hobgoblins
Rack his old bones and seven skins!
Wouldst do me injury for my sins?
EUC.: Capital, as you won't swing.
Though one day that will be your lot,
If you don't own up.
STROB.: Own up what?
EUC.: What you've robb'd hence.
STROB.: God! may I rot,
If I've robb'd anything!
(*Sotto voce.*)
Or if I didn't wish I had.

EUC.: Come shake your cloak.

STROB.: To feed your fad!

EUC.: It must be somewhere in your plaid

STROB.: Probe anywhere you please.

EUC.: Of villainy you're liberal
To make me doubt you've robb'd me at all.
Such subtleties date from the Fall;
I know your little wheeze!
Right hand again!

STROB.: Here!

EUC.: Now the other.

STROB.: Nay, here's the one, and here's his brother

EUC.: To go on searching I'll not bother;
So give it back.

STROB.: Give what?

EUC.: You're trifling are you? Don't I know
You've got it.

STROB.: Got it? Got what?

EUC.: No
I am not going to tell you, though
You long to hear. The lot
You hold of mine give back.

STROB.: You're mad.
You searched me as your fancy bade,
And nothing have you found I had.

EUC.: But stop a moment, stop!
Who was the other fellow here
Inside with you? I'm dead with fear,
For he inside will interfere;
And, once loose, off you'll hop.
And yet I've searched you through and through.
You've nothing on you; off with you!

STROB.: Death and damnation strike you!

EUC.: Pheugh!
A pretty fine thanksgiving!
I'll go inside and suffocate,
Or slit the weasand of your mate.
Out of my sight! Absquatulate!

STROB.: I'm off!

EUC.: Don't show here living.
(*Enters Temple.*)

STROB.: Dead, very dead I'd rather lie,
To dirty death done utterly,
Than not for old Iniquity
Set traps to gull his pride.
He'll hazard not his gold to hide
Within; he'll bring it soon outside.
A creaking door! They're here! Ope wide,
Doorway, for me a while.
(*Hides in a porch.*)

EUC. (*with the Pot*) :

In Faith I placed the greatest trust,
Yet in my eyes has she thrown dust,
And perish utterly I must
Have, but for Mister Raven.
I'd like that Crow to come, I would,
Who warned me, that I something good
Might . . . say not give, for give him food
Is losing and not savin' !
Now where on earth to hide this Pot ?
I'm thinking of a lonely spot
Outside the walls, a sylvan grot ;
I'll choose me there a place,
A place that's pathless, lorn and lone
With many a salley overgrown.
In Sylvan than in Faith, I own,
I'll trust with better grace.

(*He goes out.*)

STROB. : Good ! Good ! The gods wish health to me,
I'll run there first and climb some tree,
And thence I'll spy the place where he
Will hide away his gold.
Yet here for him my Master meant
Me wait ; I'll get foul punishment
With filthy lucre ; I'll be shent,
And whacks for wages told !

(*Goes out after* EUCLIO.)

LYC.: Well, Mother, now the secret's out,
You cannot any longer doubt;
You know as much as I about
Miss Phaedria Euclio.
I now entreat, and re-entreat
What I have long entreated, treat
The matter with my Uncle, sweet!
(*Wheedling her.*)

EUN.: Your wish is mine, you know.
I only hope I'll get my way
With him; if things are as you say,
Your case is just; you took the may
When flown with wine?

LYC.: Dear mother,
Should I speak falsehood to your face?

PHAEDRIA (*from* EUCLIO'S *house*):
Nurse, Nurse, I die! Our Lady, grace!
My confidence in thee I place.

LYC.: Tis she! She cries, no other!
Mother, the facts speak all too plain

EUN.: Come in with me that I may gain
From Uncle that whereof you're fain.

LYC.: Lead, Mother, and I'll follow.
(*She goes in.*)
Where is my servant Strobilus,
I wonder? Yet 'twere wrong to fuss,
On second thoughts. He's helping us.
My anger let me swallow.

Within the house I'll enter straight
Where life and death in high debate
Hold sessions to decide my fate

STROB. (*re-enters with Pot*) :

The Woodpeckers have wealth on tap,
The Hills of Gold they make their scrap-
-Heap. I alone am greater.
Your other Kings, a beggarly crew,
I will not mention them to you ;
I'm Philip in his state-r !
O frabjous day, calloo callay !
For when from here I went away
Some time ago you'd think it,
I got there sooner far than he,
And far sooner was up a tree,
And watched through every chinket
Where Ancient hid away his gold.
Him gone I down the tree-trunk bowled,
And dug out quite a bowlful !
Then off ; in there watched him retreat
Unseen—I kept just off his beat.
Hallo ! here comes Old Doleful
I'll have to hide my bowlful !

EUC. (*desperate*) :

I'm perish'd, murder'd, done !
Where run, where not to run ?
Stop, stop him ! Who stop who ?
I know not what to do !
There's nothing that I see ;
I walk blind ; verily

Whither I go, this place,
Nay, even my very face,
I cannot surely find
And settle in my mind.

(*Rushes down to audience.*)

I call you to my aid.

(*To one of them.*)

Yes, *you* I begg'd and pray'd ;
You'll show me, will you not,
The man who stole my Pot ?

(*To another.*)

You ! I can trust to you ;
Your face betrays you true.
Laugh ? Ah ! I know you all !
Thieves are there several
Disguised with dye and dress
Sitting in righteousness !

(*To others.*)

Not one of these ? I'm done !
Tell me who's got it. None ?
O pitiable plight !
Damn'd, desperately dight !
This day has brought to me
Hunger and poverty ;
There waits me but a morrow
Of groaning and foul sorrow.
Of all on earth I'm worst.
Why need I live, who first
Have lost the pile of gold

That carefully I holed,
And then myself have cheated?
Now therefore, thus defeated,
And ruin'd—yes, I swear it!
Men laugh? I cannot bear it!
(*Buries head in hands.*)

LYC.: Who is this man before our door
That's wailing and lamenting sore?
No! Yes! 'Tis Euclio, I'm sure,
Of course that seals my fate.
The truth is out; I'm sure he knows
His daughter's past her travail-throes.
Go, stay, accost him, shun him—those
Are questions inchoate.
What shall I do? I cannot tell.

EUC.: Who's speaking?

LYC.: I the miserable.

EUC.: If you are damn'd, then I'm in hell,
Such is my pain and grief!

LYC.: Be of good cheer.

EUC.: How can I, pray?

LYC.: The crime that tortures you to-day,
I did it.

EUC.: What is that you say?

LYC.: It is the truth in brief.

EUC.: What evil, boy, do I deserve
At your hands that me thus to serve,
Ruin my children, you've the nerve!

LYC.: I was divinely driven.
Divine the attraction.

EUC.: How?

LYC.: My shame
I own, and know I've earn'd your blame;
That's why to plead with you I came,
That I may now be shriven.

EUC.: Why did you dare what's not your own . . .

LYC.: What would you have? The deed is done,
And what's done cannot be undone;
It was the will of Heaven!
If not Heaven's will, it would not be

EUC.: 'Tis Heaven's will that I stock thee

LYC.: Don't, don't!

EUC.: Then why unknown to me
Lay hands on what is mine?

LYC.: I did it under influence
Of love and wine

EUC.: What impudence!
Dare here of me crave audience
With prate of love and wine!
If you've the right that you can thus
Make your excuses, then let us
Steal women's gold promiscuous,
And in the light of day.

Then, if we're caught, make drink the excuse
Or love ; for they are both the deuce,
If we of love and wine make use
To have our wicked way.

LYC. : I know I've been a fool, but then
I've come to beg your pardon.

EUC. : Men
Don't please me who excuse them when
They've done a dirty deed.
Well, " a poor virgin," but not thine
Thou shouldest not have touched.

LYC. : But mine,
Who dared to touch, I don't repine
To make her with all speed.

EUC. : You keep what's mine against my will

LYC. : Against—I do not ask it : still
It should be mine for good or ill,
And that you'll soon discover.

EUC. : Or you'll replace . . .

LYC. : Replace ! But what ?

EUC. : Your theft from me ; or like a shot
I'll hale you Judge-wards, will I not ?
And prosecute this lover.

LYC. : My theft from you ? What theft ?
From where ?

EUC. : You do not know, Lord love you ?

LYC.: Ne'er
Unless sometime yourself declare
What stolen goods you're after.

EUC.: A Pot of Gold from you I claim,
Which you've confess'd you stole.

LYC.: The same
I neither said nor stole.

EUC.: Disclaim?

LYC.: Disclaim it, yes with laughter!
For neither gold nor dirty pot
I know or knew.

EUC.: The one you got,
You know, the one from Sylvan's Grot.
Come, give it back to me.
Half-shares with you I'd sooner go.
I'll not be hard, although I know
You are a thief.

LYC.: You're mad, I trow,
To call me thief. You see
Another thing I thought you knew,
That hits me hard. I'd fain with you
In peace, if may be, now pursue
That subject quietly

EUC.: Really, you did not steal that gold?

LYC.: Really.

EUC.: Nor know who 'twas that stole't?

LYC.: That also really.

EUC.: That I'm told
You'll see as soon as you know.

LYC.: I will.

EUC.: Nor claim a share from me?
Nor house the burglar?

LYC.: I agree.

EUC.: If you play false

LYC.: His will on me
Work Jupiter, by Juno!

EUC.: Enough; now tell me what's your plea.

LYC.: If you don't know my pedigree,
Your neighbour Megadorus, he
Is Uncle to me; Father
Antimachus, you know, is dead;
Lyconides am I callèd;
Mother's Eunomia.

EUC.: You're well bred
Now what d'ye want? I'd rather
Be told.

LYC.: You have a daughter, eh?

EUC.: In there of course at home.

LYC. (*off-hand*): I say,
Betrothed to Megadorus?

EUC.: Nay,
You know the girl's whole story.

LYC.: He's bade me now relate to you
Repudiation . . .

EUC. (*excitedly*): What? Repu-
-Diation when I've got on stew
A superfine John Dory?
May all the Powers of Heaven damn
The villain for whose sake I am
Bankrupt of Gold full many a drachm!
And curse that wretched Urn!

LYC.: Hush! hush! Cheer up! And do not swear!
God grant—this ought to be your prayer—
Your loss for you and for your heir-
-Ess soon to blessing turn!

EUC.: God grant it!

LYC.: I too say Amen.
Hear now. There's none of guilty men
So lost to sense of shame but when
He feels it makes excuses.
I now beseech you, Euclio,
That whatsoe'er peccadillo
To me you and your daughter owe
According to the uses
Of Law you pardon, and bestow
Her on me as my wife. I know
I wronged her in the Portico
At Ceres' Feast foregathered,
Driven by wine and by my youth

EUC.: O dear, is that the wicked truth?

LYC.: Why this lament you, when forsooth
You're but by me grandfather'd
Upon your daughter's wedding-day?
Who in her tenth month—count them, pray—
Has borne a child: and therefore a
Formal renunciation.
My uncle sends you now for me;
Go in, inquire if facts agree
With these my words.

EUC.: Done utterly!
Thus now to my damnation
Disasters thicken, scores on scores;
The truth of this I'll probe indoors.
(*Goes in.*)

LYC.: And I'll soon follow. This restores
My ship to smoother water.
Where's Strobilus? I cannot tell.
What if I wait for him a spell,
And later go inside as well?
Meanwhile old Euclio's daughter
Has at her heels an ancient Nurse;
I'll learn my fate for better or worse;
She'll know it all chapter and verse.

STROB.: O joy, O rapture choice!
For I've a four-pound Pot of Gold;
What richer man does Athens hold?
Or whom do kinder gods enfold?

LYC.: I surely know that voice.

STROB.: Is that my Master that I see?

LYC.: My servant this?

STROB.: The very he!

LYC.: It is!

STROB.: Accost!

LYC.: I'll close; maybe
He's spoken to the Nurse.
I told him to.

STROB. (*aside*): What if I say
I've found it, and describe my prey,
Then ask him for my freedom, eh?
I'll go and see . . . (*to* LYC.) I've found . . .

LYC.: Found what?

STROB.: Don't think what in the bean
Urchins keep shouting they have seen.

LYC.: Your usual humbug this you mean.

STROB.: Hear, Master, hold your ground!

LYC.: Come then, speed up.

STROB.: I've found to-day
Great riches.

LYC.: Then where are they, pray?

STROB.: A four-pound Pot of Gold, I say.

LYC.: What is this larceny!

STROB.: I stole it from old Euclio.

LYC.: Where is the gold?

STROB.: In my bureau!
Now set me free

LYC.: I let you go?
With crimes heaped mountains high?

STROB.: Hands off, sir; I know your intent.
A pretty trick your mind to tent!
To snatch it from me you were bent.
What if 'twas treasure-trove?

LYC.: You can't prove stuff although you're slim.
Give back the gold.

STROB. (*crestfallen*): Give back!

LYC.: To him

STROB.: Whence?

LYC.: From your bureau.

STROB.: 'Tis my whim
To chatter stuff, by Jove!

# THE TRICKSTER

(PSEUDOLUS)

Translated by

H. LIONEL ROGERS

## Characters of the Play

Pseudolus Servus, Sly, a slave

Calidorus Adolescens, Calidore, a young gentleman

Ballio Leno, Bill Bailey, a bawd

Lorarii, whipping slaves

Meretrices, light women

Simo Senex, Old Simon

Callipho Senex, Old Calliphon

Harpax Cacula, Sergeant Plunder

Charinus Adolescens, Carino, a young gentleman

Puer, a young slave

Cocus, a cook

Simia Sycophanta, Ape, a hanger-on

# THE SERVICEABLE SERVANT

## ACT I

*A street in Athens: Left, city gate with road to Harbour; right, road to Market-place; background six houses of which the last two on the spectator's right belong to* CALLIPHO *and* SIMO *respectively; a narrow lane separates* SIMO'S *from* BALLIO'S *house on the extreme right.*

PSEUD.: If from your dumbness I could guess,
Master, what wretched wretchedness
Wastes you, I'd gladly spare the stress
And labour of us both—
My asking and your answering me—
But as it is, since that can't be,
I'm under the necessity
Of questioning, though loth.
Tell me, why is't these many days
Your lifeless finger toys and plays
With tear-wash'd tablets, yet you raise
No man to share your mind?
Speak out, that I may know as well
What I know not.

CALID.: I'm held in hell
My Pseudolus.

PSEUD.: May Jove repel
Such chastisement unkind.

CALID.: In this my Justicer's not Jove;
I smart beneath the rods of Love,
And no chastisement from above.

PSEUD.: But may I know your grief?
You held me in the days of yore
Chief comrade and chief counsellor.

CALID.: My mind's unchanged.

PSEUD.: Then tell me more,
And I'll bring you relief
With hand or help or good counsel.

CALID.: Then take these tablets; they will tell
What wretchedness and wasting spell
Are in conspiracy.

PSEUD.: I'll humour you. (*Mockingly.*) But
what's this screed?
Methinks these letters seek to breed,
One mounted on the other!

CALID.: Read;
A truce to mockery!

PSEUD.: Egad, unless a prophet read,
They'll be by none interpreted.

CALID.: Why are your comments so ill-bred
On such a darling letter?
And darling tablets, darling hand!

PSEUD.: I ask, had ever hen such hand?
A scratching, scrawling, henpeck hand
Wrote such a darling letter!

CALID.: I hate you; give them back, or read.

PSEUD.: Of course—right through; if you'll pay heed.

CALID. (*in a day-dream*):
I'm miles away.

PSEUD.: Then summon . . . speed,
And post home to what's writ!

CALID.: My tongue at any rate I'll spare.
You from those waxen tablets tear
My mind; it must be over there,
Not in my breast is it!

PSEUD. (*slily*):
I see your lady, Calidore!

CALID. (*eagerly*):
Wherever is she, I implore?

PSEUD.: Here, written in the tablets' core
Upon the wax she's sprawling!

CALID. (*angry*):
Now all the powers of heaven . . .

PSEUD. (*interrupting*): Keep!

CALID.: Like grass in midsummer I leap
To fulness sudden, sudden sleep!

PSEUD.: I'm reading, stop that bawling!

CALID. : Go on.

PSEUD. (*reading*) : Fénice to Calidore—
Through wax and wood and letters for
Interpreters of suffering sore
She sends her lover health,
And asks for health from him again
With tears and tottering heart and brain.

CALID. (*gloomily*) :
Lost ! nowhere can I find that vein
To send her for her health !

PSEUD. : That vein ! What vein ?

CALID. : A golden vein.

PSEUD. : You want to send her back again
Gold for her wood ? The thing's insane !
Take care, I pray, my Master.

CALID. : Read, read ; for I will make you learn
How suddenly I burn and burn
To find the gold to serve my turn
And Fénice's disaster.

PSEUD. (*reading*) :
" The Pander me abroad has sold
For twenty pounds of foreign gold,
And ere he went the soldier told
Out fifteen pieces golden.
Now only five delay his plan :
Therefore this Macedonian
For token left his face—a man
In wax for signet holden.

With him who brings the counterpart
I'm to be sent, and for our start
Next Easter Monday's set apart."
And that's of course to-morrow!

CALID.: My day of doom is near unless
You help me.

PSEUD.: Let's read all.

CALID. (*rapturously*): O yes!
I think I'm talking with her. Bless
My ears with joy and sorrow.

PSEUD. (*reads*):
" Our lives, our loves, our lovers' meetings
Jests, whispers, interplay, sweet-sweetings,
Embracements close of love with love,
Lips tender nibbling soft as dove,
Kisses our sacrament, and prest
So sweet my little trembling breast!
From all these joys to me and thee
Divorce, disseverance, robbery,
Unless there's help in thee or me!
What I have known I've tried to tell
Love true or feign'd to sift. Farewell."

CALID. (*sadly*):
O Pseu, 'tis lamentably writ!

PSEUD. (*critical*):
Most lamentably!

CALID.: Weep at it.

PSEUD. : But I have eyes as hard as grit,
I cannot e'en induce
Them spirt a single tear for you

CALID. : Why not ?

PSEUD. : We're such a dry-eyed crew !

CALID. : Then is there nothing you can do
To help me ?

PSEUD. : What the deuce . . .

CALID. (*sighing*) :
Oh !

PSEUD. (*imitating*) :
Oh ! Don't stint, for I can moan.

CALID. : I'm beggar'd even of a loan !

PSEUD. (*mocking*) :
Oh !

CALID. : Not a penny of my own
To bless myself with.

PSEUD. (*mocking*) : Oh !

CALID. (*in despair*) :
He'll take Fénice to-morrow.

PSEUD. (*knuckles to his eyes*) : Boo !

CALID. (*indignant*) :
Is that the help I get from you ?

PSEUD. : I give what's mine ; moans are a brew
We keep on tap, you know !

CALID.: I'm done for! Can you lend to-day
A pound? To-morrow I'll repay.

PSEUD.: Scarce if I pawn'd myself. But pray
What will you do with it?

CALID.: I'll buy myself a rope and swing!
Ere dark thro' dark I mean to wing.

PSEUD.: Who'll then repay your borrowing,
If I lend you a bit?
Is it for such a paltry thing,
To do me down, you mean to swing,
If I the cash to you shall bring?

CALID.: Of course I cannot live,
If stranger and abroad they keep
Her from me.

PSEUD.: Wherefore cry (*aside*), you sheep?
Live on!

CALID.: What can I do but weep
When not a soul will give?
A farthing to me, and I've here
Myself no ready . . .

PSEUD. (*interrupting*): As I hear
The letter's meaning, much I fear,
Unless your tears are golden
Your hope those tears will somehow give
You power with him who holds captive
Your darling's water in a sieve,
For nothing in it's holden.

But I won't leave a lad in love
By help from hell or from above
I hope some " Power wad gie " a shove
To win you golden succour.
I know not why I say so be't
But be it will, my brows so beat.

CALID.: May only deeds and words soon meet
As close as bib and tucker.

PSEUD.: You know of course, if I raise Cain
I'll make the welkin ring again.
Or rattle rather.

CALID.: In your brain
My hope for life is laid.

PSEUD.: If I make this lady your bride,
Or twenty pounds for you provide,
Tell me, will you be satisfied.

CALID.: Yes, if 'tis as you've said

PSEUD.: Ask me at once for twenty pounds
That you may know that I've good grounds
For what I promised. Ask me. Zounds
To promise I would rather.

CALID. (*incredulous*):
You'll give me twenty pounds to-day?

PSEUD.: I will; but do not worry, pray.
And lest you contradict I'll say
I'll even *touch* your father
If there's none else that I can touch.

CALID. : God keep you mine ! If you prove such,
I'll give you leave to do as much
For love's sake to my mother.

PSEUD. : For that sleep safe on either eye.

CALID. : Ear.

PSEUD. : Far less common was my cry.
And now, lest anyone deny,
I make my proclamation.
(*As if a herald*)
" By these presents I caution all
Here met in Sessions, thane and thrall,
Friend and acquaintance, yea I call
To witness all the nation ! "

CALID. : Hush, Pseudolus ! Shut up, I beg !
The Pimp's door crack'd.

PSEUD. : Why not his leg ?

BOTH. : He's coming out, the addled egg !

BALLIO, *a slave-merchant, enters, with several male and female slaves, from his house*

BALLIO : Come forth, come forth, you lazy clowns,
ill-gotten and ill-bought,
Of whom not one in well-doing has ever
taken thought ;
Whom by this pattern save I prove no
gain is there for gaining ;
(*Flogs the men all round*)

I've never seen such ass-like men, so
rough their ribs with caning;
More hurt have you the more you strike;
these whipping-postes wit
Is thus-wise wise: When chance afford,
take, steal, run off with it;
Plunder, drink, eat, take flight;
This it is is their delight;
You'd rather choose
Leave wolves with ewes
Than such to guard your right.
Who seem not ill when you behold their
face, but fail in operation;
Now, therefore, save you bend your
minds on this my proclamation,
Drive idleness from heart and eyes, and
soporification,
I'll soundly stripe with thongs your
thighs,
As ne'er were rugs of Southern dyes,
Nor Alexandrian broideries
Of beasts on shaven tapestries.
'Twas only yesterday
To all I said my say,
And parcelled out their provinces;
But you in slackness sit
So wrapp'd in wicked wit,
By foul offence
You force me hence—
—forth to recall your offices.
You are so sunk in sluggardry,

More stubborner than this and me ;
(*Dangles the whip before them*)
Do this :—but they do other things ;
Pay heed to this :—you plaguey things,
To what I say hearken and list,
O rascals born to feel the fist.
(*Flogs one of them.*)
Marry, your hide shall never be harder than this my hiding.
What now ? It smarts ? So smarts the slave his master for deriding.
Stand all by me and what I say look you be mind-abiding.
You, pitcher-bearer, water draw,
Fill full cook's saucepan ; lantern-jaw
With th' hatchet, lay you down the law
That governs the wood-chopping.

SLAVE. 'Tis blunt !

BALLIO : Let be ; do I the less
For that enjoin your helpfulness
To robe the house in shining dress ?
Be off ! You'll rue the stopping.
Set couches, you ! You, clean the plate !
You also lay the table straight !
That when I come home from Market I find the whole preparèd.
The floor be-swept, the rushes strewn,

The carpets beat, and all in tune,
Wash'd and anointed every loon,
And every chamber aired.
My birthday 'tis you must help keep,
Must put the bacon in to steep,
And sowes breast in water deep;
You hear what I am saying?
With state I'd greet the men of state,
That they may credit me estate;
Go in, your quirks quick celebrate,
Let there be no delaying!
I'm off to Market that the store
Of fish I fetch others before;
Go, slave, in front, that no man bore
His way into my money.
Nay, stop! For one hometruth almost forgot
I here this morning.
D'ye hear me, girls, to you in turn I give
this solemn warning.
Your youthful years everyone
Soft dainty and delightful wone,
Of noblemen the minion;
This day I'll learn which one I
May one day set at liberty
And which one sell, which is busy
About her hair, or her belly,
Her savings, sleep, or sorrow.
Mind that to-day your lovers pour
Rich presents at this humble door;
To-day must bring a whole year's store,
Or you be trash to-morrow!

You know that this is my birthday!
Where are the gentlemen, I say,
To whom you are the honied way
To life and joy and kisses?
Let all to whom you're ministers
Send companies of carriers
With wherewithal for gold or furs,
And all you love, young misses.
What help at home are you but trouble,
My wine and wealth you only gobble,
Yourselves and paunches but drench double,
While I am drained dry.
So now 'tis best I should address
Each one by name, that each confess
That she her orders has express;
And all their minds apply.
Hedylium, first with you I treat,
Who are the Cornmonger his sweet,
Who mountains has of bread and meat;
See that corn this way wander!
A year's supply for me and all
My house; my bins with corn be tall,
My name be changed, and men me call
A Prince instead of Pander.

CALID. (*aside*):

'Ugh! How the gallows-bird talks big!
D'ye thinks he boasts enough?

PSEUD.: The Pig!

He's beast and boastful! Mind your wig!
And mind the thing you're doing!

BALLIO : You, Aischrodora, at your feet,
You've purveyors of butchers' meat,
Who for their living lie and cheat
And swear to others' ruin.
Now listen well ; unless to-day
Of hooks full heavy with their prey—
Three carcases that weigh and sway—
I have my larder full,
To-morrow, as I've read in book
Two sons of god one Dirce took
And bound to bull, to larder-hook
I'll string you for your bull !

CALID. (*aside*) :
I boil with rage to hear such talk ;
That such a fellow men let walk
And cull our girlhood stem and stalk !
Where are they ? Where are hiding
All of whose life and love the flower
Is still outside the pander's power ?
Why not our people's plague devour
Each with the other siding ?
But I'm too foolish, too untaught ;
Let those men dare the deed who ought,
Whom love to slavery has brought,
But vengeance is delaying.

CALID. : O Pseudolus, you hear his talk ?

PSEUD. : Hear, Master ? Yes, I'm minding.

CALID. : To save my love from harlotry what
spells for him art binding ?

PSEUD.: Don't worry; keep your mind a blank;
I'll do for both the thinking.
We've wished each other well for years;
so old our love, it's stinking.
I'll send him for his fête to-day bad big
full-blown Disaster.

CALID.: What good?

PSEUD.: Divert your thoughts

CALID.: But . . .

PSEUD.: Fut!

CALID.: I'm tortured!

PSEUD.: Courage, Master.

CALID.: I cannot.

PSEUD.: Will, that so you can!

CALID.: How can I conquer feeling?

PSEUD.: Don't heed it in bad fortune, but what's
to your good be stealing.

CALID.: That's stuff; unless a lover plays the
fool you lose your profit.

PSEUD. (*severely*):
More?

CALID.: Pseudolus, let me be naught.

PSEUD. (*as if going*):
Dismiss me; send me off it!

CALID.: Stop, stop! I'll be just as you wish.

PSEUD. (*returning*) : That's sense now.

BALLIO (*coming out of his house, to his slave*) :
Night is falling
I'll rue delay ; before me, boy.
(*Turns in the direction of the Market.*)

CALID. (*in despair*) :
Gone ! Oh ! why not recall him ?

PSEUD. (*teasing*) :
Why hurry ? Gently.

CALID. (*pleading*) : Ere he's gone

BALLIO (*to slave*) :
Plague take your dawdling boy.

PSEUD. : Sir Birthday, Hi ! To you I cry, Birthday,
Birthday, ahoy !
Have pity on us and put back ;
We want with you to have a crack ;
Stay, though we bid Your Business slack.

BALLIO : What *is* this ? Who's the quiz
Who's brought me to this plaguy pass
When full of business ?

PSEUD. : One who was
Your saviour.

BALLIO : Dead then, if he *was* ;
Though some use, if he is.

PSEUD. : Arch arrogance !

BALLIO : A nuisance arch !

CALID. : Arrest the man, pursue him !

BALLIO (*to slave*) : March !

PSEUD. (*running round*) :
Let's block him this way.

BALLIO : May Jove parch
You, whosoever you be.

PSEUD. : You, you I wish . . .

BALLIO : But I you both
Turn this way, boy.

PSEUD. (*running round*) : Are you so loth ?

BALLIO (*turning his back*) :
I don't like talk.

PSEUD. (*round again*) : But on my oath
'Tis to your profit, booby.

BALLIO : Please may I or may I not budge ?

PSEUD. : Stop.

BALLIO : Let me go.

CALID. : Hear, Ballio.

BALLIO : Fudge !
I'm deaf to Empty-pockets. (*To slave.*)
Trudge !

CALID. (*pleading*) :
I've given while I had.

BALLIO : I don't ask what you've given.

CALID. : When
I have I'll give.

BALLIO (*drily*) : When you have, then
Take.

CALID. : What I've trusted and givèn
To you was credit bad.

BALLIO : Your plea's but talk ; the deed is dead !
Fool ! Plead a cause that's been pleadèd !

PSEUD. : At least respect my Master's head
(*Pointing at* CALID.)

BALLIO : I've long known what he's been.
But what he is let him too know.

PSEUD. : Just once have pity, Ballio,
When Pity doth with Profit go.

BALLIO : At that price, all serene !
Why, if to God I sacrifice,
And, offering in hand, a slice
Of Profit's offer'd me, th' Office
Divine I'd leave instead.
One can't resist that duty, though
All other duties they must go.

PSEUD. : He gives to God a credit low
Whom most he ought to dread.

BALLIO : I'll sauce you, slave the sorriest.

PSEUD. : God treat you as we both think best ;
Or if you're on a queerer quest,
Nor love nor treat you well !

BALLIO: Well, what's the matter, Calidore?

CALID.: One loves, and one is bitter poor!

BALLIO: I'd pity, if I could feel a score
With pity pitiable.

PSEUD.: We know your character; don't preach.
Do you know our wish?

BALLIO: Almost; each
Wishes me ill.

PSEUD.: Yes and craves speech.
So, prithee, pay attention.

BALLIO: Yes, but I'm busy; don't be slow.

PSEUD.: My Master is ashamed to owe
The sum he promised long ago.

BALLIO: What he's afraid to mention
Is easier borne than my regret;
His "did not pay" than my "not get".

PSEUD.: He'll pay it; wait a few days, yet.
For reasons of his own
He fears that you may sell the maid.

BALLIO: If he had wish'd he might have paid
He had the chance.

CALID. (*dejected*): No cash, I said.

BALLIO: Who loved would find a loan.
To a money-lender make submission,
And add the lender's small commission...
(*Watching the effect of his words*)
Steal from his father.

PSEUD.: Foul addition!
No fear that you'd steer right.

BALLIO: I would not pander . . .

CALID. (*interrupting*): And could I
Steal from a father old and sly?
My duty too forbids me try.

BALLIO: Then cuddle close at night
Your duty for Phoenicium!
But though you may make duty come
Before your love, there must be some-
-One you can ask for money
Is everyone to you father?

CALID.: The word borrow 's a dead letter.

BALLIO: But Interest would bring you her
By way of cash.

PSEUD. (*leering*): But, sonny,
When leeches rise from table fed,
They don't return to those they've bled
Their cash, but take good care instead
Not to meet those who borrow!

CALID.: I'm too unhappy, and I can
Nowhere find out a monied man;
And so of love, and sovereign ban-
-kruptcy I die in sorrow!

BALLIO: Then speculate in oil-shares,
And buy and sell, as bulls or bears;
You'll soon arrange your love-affairs
At tons per cent., not twenty!

CALID.: The law's my ruin. I am done!
A minor, not yet twenty-one
All fear to trust.

BALLIO: I too am spun!
I fear to trust.

PSEUD.: Bah! plenty
Of profit you've made to your shame
From him.

BALLIO: Profit you need not name
Unless your lover came and came
And gave and gave for ever.
He who has naught to love must cease.

CALID.: No pity?

BALLIO: And you no pennypiece!
You can't clink words, and yet a lease
Of life and health I'ld never
Deny you.

PSEUD.: Hullo! is he dead?

BALLIO: To me of course from what he's said.
A gravestone's o'er the lover's head
When he implores the pander.
Approach me with a silver'd plaint;
Your present cry however quaint
Does not mean silver: make distraint
On stepma . . . or philander . . .

PSEUD.: Hullo! did you his father wed?

BALLIO: The Lord forbid.

PSEUD. (*grandly*) : Do what he said
Upon *my* credit, if you dread
To put your trust in him.
Quick to your net I'll make the whole
From land or sea or somewhere roll
BALLIO : I trust you !

PSEUD. : Why not ?

BALLIO : On my soul
My chance would be as dim
As if I tied a runaway bitch
To lamb's sweetbreads.

PSEUD. : An answer which
For my good turn to you is rich
Reward ; what now d'ye say ?

CALID. : I ask you just one week to wait.
Don't sell Fénice, or devastate
Her lover.

BALLIO : Don't get in a state ;
I'll even six months stay.

CALID. (*in ecstacy*) :
O, you're a dear ! You take the cake !

BALLIO : Shall I your joy more joyful make ?

CALID. : How ?

BALLIO : I've no Fénice now at stake.

CALID. (*in despair again*):

No Fénice? Pseudolus,
Fetch priests and some meat-offering
To sacrifice to this High King,
Who out-Joves Jove in everything.

BALLIO: No sacrifice for us!
The insides of a lamb . . . skin purse
(*aside*)
I must have to avert my curse.

CALID.: Fetch lambs, look sharp, you're like a hearse;
You hear the will of . . . Ketch.
(*aside*)

PSEUD. (*going*):

I'll soon be back, for I must run
Outside the Gates before I've done.

CALID.: Why that way?

PSEUD.: Ex-e-cu-ti-on-
-ers twain from thence I'll fetch
With tinkling bells at every nod,
Also two schools of birchen rod
To sate with sacrifice this god!

BALLIO: Go and be crucified!

PSEUD.: God Pander on the cross will lie.

BALLIO: 'Tis not for your sake I will die.

PSEUD.: How's that?

BALLIO: Because if dead am I,
No master's by your side
In villainy. For your sake I
(*To* CALID.)
May very likely come to die.

CALID.: How's that?

BALLIO: Because if I'm ali-ve
You'll ne'er be good as gold.

CALID.: Then in dead earnest answer me.
This question: have you not my de
-ar Fénice on sale?

BALLIO: Certainly
Not! Long ago she's sold.

CALID.: How?

BALLIO: "Without fittings but with frieze
And all the usual appurtenances!"

CALID.: You've sold my darling? How much
please?

BALLIO: A matter of eighty pound.

CALID. (*indignant*):
For eighty . . .

BALLIO (*interrupting*):
Thousand you'ld prefer
To a Macedonian officer.
Already half's paid down for her.

CALID.: What's that you tell me, hound?

BALLIO: A golden angel yours has grown.

CALID.: Why did you dare?

BALLIO: She was my own;
I wanted to.

CALID.: Ochone! Ochone!
Run, Pseudolus; a sword.

PSEUD.: A sword! What for?

CALID.: To strike him, kill!

PSEUD.: Better yourself; for Ballio will
Of famine soon have had his fill!

CALID.: Of all who break their word
The Prince on earth, what is your plea?
You swore to sell to none but me
In good set terms.

BALLIO: Yes, I agree,
The terms were very nice.

CALID.: You've broken faith, you criminal

BALLIO: I've housed my gold, and now I shall,
Though criminal, have capital
At home to sacrifice.
But righteous you, a just man's son,
Coin of the realm have never a one.

CALID.: Stand by me, Pseudolus, and stun
This rascal with abuse.

PSEUD.: I'll never race so rapidly
To court to get myself set free.

CALID.: Heap contumely on contumely.

PSEUD. : I'll damn him like the deuce.

(*They stand on each side of the Pander and shou*
*in antiphon*)

CALID. : Rascal, criminal, blow-catcher.

PSEUD. : Gallows-bird and body-snatcher.

CALID. : Pander fraudulent, litigious.

PSEUD. : Parricide and sacrilegious.

CALID. : Law-breaker, the young man's curse.

PSEUD. : Thief and runaway and worse.

CALID. : Charlatan, foul panderer.

PSEUD. : Scum, offscourings, perjurer.

(*They stop out of breath*

BALLIO : Yes, yes, yes, yes !
Choir angelic, I confess.

CALID. : You flogg'd your mother and you
father.

BALLIO (*sneering*) :
And then I kill'd them also, rather
Than give them food ; was that a sin

PSEUD. : Words thro' a sieve we're pouring in.
Lost labour !

BALLIO (*sneering*) :
Do more charges bring

CALID. : Aren't you ashamed of anything ?

BALLIO (*jeering*) :

A lover like a nut sans kernel !
Found empty ! Many names infernal
You've flung at me, but if the Colonel
Brings not his fiver hither,
As this is settling day for him,
If he defaults, I think I'll trim,
That is I will indulge in sym-
-pathy.

CALID. (*impatient*) : What's all this blither ?

BALLIO : If you pay down the cash to me
I'll break my word to Massa D.
That's what I mean by sympathy.
And later, if I've leisure
We'll have another talk ; sans cash
Appeals to pity are just trash—
That is my ultimatum. Fash
Yourself with your next measure !

(*Turns to go*)

CALID. : You're off ?

BALLIO : I'm busy.

(*Goes*)

PSEUD. (*aside*) : Will be soon.
He's mine, unless the gods maroon.
As lampreys cooks I'll bone the coon.

(*To* C.)

Now, Calidore, attention !

CALID. : Your will ?

PSEUD.: I will besiege this town.
(*Points to* B.'s *house*)
The capture needs a man, no clown;
Sly, careful, smart, commands to crown,
Not sleep on duty.

CALID.: Mention
To me your purpose, please.

PSEUD.: In time
I'll see that you're informed, for I'm
Not going to say it twice; my rhyme
Is long enough without.

CALID.: Most excellent, most politic!

PSEUD.: Make haste, and bring the man back quick

CALID.: Friends to be trusted don't grow thick.

PSEUD.: I know, so carry out
Of both the kinds of friend a must-
-er, and find out the one to trust.

CALID.: I'll have him here.

PSEUD.: Now can't you just
Be off, your words you flout!
(*Exit* C.)

PSEUDOLUS *alone executes a pas seul singing*
(*Tune: "If you go in."*)

1. Now that he's gone,
You stand alone;
What will you do now, O Pseudolus?

2. On Master's son
   You've pour'd abun-
   -dance of delightful holus-bolus!
3. Webs you must spin
   Whence to begin
   Work on the spells for him you're binding.
4. Yet you've no drip
   Of statesmanship
   Steady and sure, your wool for winding.
5. Ne'er a set bound
   Where it's unwound
   But as a Poet, whose brain is teeming,
6. Takes paper, there
   Seeks what's nowhere,
   Finds it and makes a lie truth-seeming.
7. So like a blind
   Bard, I will find
   Money nowhere in earth or heaven.
8. Long time I swore
   To Calidore
   This from his servant shall be given.
9. And I did plan
   To net our old man
   But he has somehow first got even.

Now I must hush my tune and tone;
Here's Master, Simo, not alone,

But with his neighbour Calliphon.
And from that ancient grave
I'll dig my twenty pounds to-day
To give young Master. Now this wa
Their conversation to waylay.

(*Hides in shadow of a porch*

SIMO: If Athens now should have
From lovers or from spendthrifts one
To be their Premier, why none
Would get the better of my son.
His name's a household-word!
For others bring the news to me
He wants to set his mistress free,
And therefore seeks the £ s. d.,
As long ago occurr'd
To me, and I was on the scent
But hid my tracks.

PSEUD. (*aside*): The thing I meant
Is scotch'd; and stuck is my intent
He knows his son a wonder!
And where I wanted to apply,
The road is block'd up utterly.
Our treasury has run sand-dry;
For plunderers no plunder!

CALLIPHO: The men who bear or handle dung,
If I'd my way, should all be hung
By itching ear and tattling tongue.
For this disgraceful news
They bring you, that your son is fain
For cash his mistress to bargain,

May be just lies and falsehood plain.
But if as true as true's
What novelty, what miracle
If he, a young man loves full well
And tries to free his Annabel.

PSEUD. (*aside*) :
The darling Calliphon !

SIMO : I'd hate him to be out of date.

CALLIPHO : But all in vain your Hymn of Hate !
You should not in your youthful state
Such burdens take upon
Yourself. The father should be free
From blame who wants his son to be
Less blameworthy than ever he
Has been ; what you have done
In spending and in naughtiness
Divided would have made a mess
For every Roman ; wonder less
If he's his father's son.

PSEUD. : Mon Dieu ! How few the decent folk !
Your father's just the sort of bloke
That such a son should have.

SIMO : Who spoke ?
(*Sees* PSEUDOLUS)
Oh ! Pseudolus : my slave !
My son's corrupter, fountain-head
Of his misdeeds, his guide, his ped-
-agogue ; I'd have him torturèd.

CALLIPHO: Now that is folly grave,
To flaunt your tempers; much more wise
To wheedle and to catechise
Whether their tales are true or lies.
A just mind halves hard labour.

SIMO: I'll hear.

(*Advances slowly towards* PSEUDOLUS)

PSEUD. (*aside*): My boy, they come your way,
Make ready what you mean to say
To our old man . . . Master, good-day;
I greet you, then give, if I may
The surplus to (*bows to* CALLIPHO) my neighbour.

SIMO (*drily*):
Good-day. What's up?

PSEUD. (*striking an attitude*): This is my stand

SIMO: Isn't the fellow's standing grand?

CALLIPHO: On good and trust, I understand.

PSEUD.: A slave, if so he be
Guiltless and innocent's allow'd
Before his Master to be proud.

CALLIPHO (*pleasantly*):
My boy, we're rather in a clôud;
So there are questions we
Desire to ask on what we've heard.

SIMO: *He*'ll finish you with word for word
Until you'd think that you conferr'd
With Socrates, not Pseu.

PSEUD.: You've long despised me—that I see;
You've little confidence in me;
You want me to be bad; I'll be
(*With meaning*)
As good as gold to you!

SIMO: "Vacant possession" give me here
Within the porches of your ear
That words may "move" à mon désir.

PSEUD.: Say anything you care
Although I'm angry.

SIMO: You with me!
With master slave!

PSEUD.: Is that to thee
So wonderful?

SIMO: Why certainly;
You tell me to beware
Of you for fear your anger rise;
And think to lash me otherwise
Than I'm accustom'd to chastise
Your faults. (*To* CALL.) What think
you, friend?

CALLIPHO: Egad, I think his rage is right.
Your confidence in him *is* slight.

SIMO: O, let him rage; I'll watch his spite
That it may not offend.
(*To* PSEUD.)
You now, my question answer.

PSEUD.: Well,
Ask what you will, but what I tell
Consider as an oracle.

SIMO : Pay heed, and mind your vow.
Does my son love a flute-girl ?

PSEUD. : *Oui.*

SIMO : And does he want to set her free ?

PSEUD. : *Ça aussi, oui.*

SIMO : And out of me
By flattery and frow-
-sy stratagems you hope to screw
The money ?

PSEUD. (*mocking*) : Hope to screw from you !

SIMO : To give my son to free his Sue.
Confess ; say *ça, mais oui !*

PSEUD. : *Ça, mais oui.*

CALLIPHO : He does not say No !

SIMO : Just what I told you long ago.

CALLIPHO : I well remember.

SIMO (*to* PSEUD.) : Why, fellow,
Did you hide all from me ?
As soon as you had such bad news
Why knew I not ?

PSEUD. : I did not choose
My Master's servant should accuse
His master to his master,
And plaguy ways thus propagate.

SIMO (*to* CALL.) :
Would you the fellow treadmill straight ?

CALLIPHO : What's his offence, friend Simo ?

SIMO : Great !
(*Stopping* C.'s *answer*)
No more ! For I know faster
What is my business.

PSEUD. : The blame
Is mine ; yet hearken all the same
Why I withheld from you the name
Of Calidore's amour.
Treadmill I knew in store for me
If I did that.

SIMO : Did you not see
Treadmill from me in store for thee
For coveting his spoor ?

PSEUD. : Yes.

SIMO : Why not tell me ?

PSEUD. : Why, the fear
Of yours was further, his more near ;
There's daylight betwixt there and here.

SIMO : Yes, but to-morrow morning ?
For here from me you cannot screw
The cash, above all since I knew.
Lest any give you credit too
I'll give the whole world warning.

PSEUD. (*wheedling*) :
I'll never go on bended knee
To any while you live ; to me
Of course you'll give the £ s. d. ;
From you I'm sure to draw.

SIMO : You draw for me ? Well, do your best.
Gouge out my eyes if I divest . . .

PSEUD. (*interrupting*) :
You will. Of me be careful, lest . . .

SIMO (*not letting him finish*) :
At least lay down as law,
If you divest me of my cash,
'Twill be like raising elm from ash.

PSEUD. : I'll work the miracle.

CALLIPHO (*to* S. *mock-tragically*) : The lash
You'll give him if he don't.

PSEUD. : But if I do ?

SIMO : Long as you live
'Tis yours : for witness God I give
You

PSEUD. : Mind your memory's not a sieve
Forgetting is your wont.
I give you warning to beware.
(*Mock-tragic*)
Again I say Beware ! Beware !

SIMO : I ask you, can I but be ware
When you foretell my fate.

PSEUD. (*prophetically*) :
To-day you'll give the cash to me
With your own hands.

CALLIPHO : O master he,
If he keeps faith !

PSEUD. : To slavery
If I don't, lead me straight.

SIMO (*ironically*) :
That's very nice and kind of you !
And you my slave already too !

PSEUD. : Shall I say something to the two
To magnify your wonder ?

CALLIPHO : I'd love to hear ; your talk's delight.

SIMO : I don't mind listening.

PSEUD. : Ere I fight
That battle, I will do despite,
With huge historic plunder !

SIMO : What despite ?

PSEUD. : From your neighbour here—
I'll make that flute-girl disappear,
The baggage to your son so dear.
By flattery and frow-
-sy stratagems I'll circumvent
Delightfully the pander-gent,
Accomplish'd both the things I meant
Before the evening now.

SIMO : If you do both your promised works,
You'll beat for bravery the Turks ;
But if you don't, what reason lurks
Beneath to spare " hard labour ? "

PSEUD.: Nay "penal servitude for life",
Not treadmill for one day. If I've
Succeeded in the double strife,
The cash I give your neighbour
(*Points* to BALLIO'S *house*
You'll freely give it back to me?

CALLIPHO: Sound commonsense, Simo; agree.

SIMO: What if they're in conspiracy?
Or weaving webs of wile
To rob me of my £ s. d.?

PSEUD.: What man more impudent than me
If I should dare such villainy?
(*As if hurt*
Master, I'm not so vile.
If we've made compact or agreed
Upon this matter, or succeed
In reconciling greed with greed,
As in a manuscript
The pens of secretaries score
Deep characters, behind before
You may with birchen rods galore
Myself have soundly whipt.

SIMO: Proclaim the match, since such your wish

PSEUD. (*to* CALLIPHO):
To-day, sir, be my standing dish;
Don't fash yourself with other fish.

CALLIPHO: But yesterday I meant
Pour la campagne to take the train

PSEUD. : Dismantle ; plot a new campaign.

CALLIPHO : Stop for your sake I must, that's plain,
To see your tournament
I'm longing, Pseudolus ; if he
(*Pointing to* SIMO)
Refuse to give the £ s. d.
He promised, then apply to me.

SIMO : I will not moult a feather

PSEUD. : Gad, if the money I don't get,
Loud summons long shall you beset.
Come, leave the scene to me to set ;
In with you both together.

CALLIPHO : So be it ; we must humour you.

PSEUD. (*to* C.) :
Please stay at home.

CALLIPHO : I promise, Pseu.

SIMO : I'm off to town, but back by two.

CALLIPHO : Yes come back.

PSEUD. : Hell for leather !

(CALLIPHO *goes into his house ;* SIMO *takes the road to the market.*)

PSEUD. (*to the Audience*) :
'Tis my suspicion you suspect,
And therefore I'm the architect
Of magic palaces like these
To entertain you and to please

With fears that I shall never do
The miracle I promised you.
Like Simo I'll not moult a feather—
Nay, that's as safe as winter weather
How I shall do it I don't know,
But done it shall be. Those who go
In for the Stage must first invent
And then find new ways to " present
But if they can't, let them give way
To those who can. A moment, pray,
Let me go in, by introspection
To commandeer some choice confection
I'll soon be back ; you shan't wait long
Meanwhile, Sir Flute-player, a song.

(*He goes into the house of* SIMO.

## ACT II

PSEUDOLUS *comes out of* SIMO'S *house.*

PSEUD : By Jupiter, whate'er I do, how beautifully dreams come true !
Of plans deep-hid in heart of hearts there's none to flutter or give starts.
For that is folly to present high deeds to timid temperament.
Nay, everything depends on how you magnify them here and now ;
For in my breast this many a day I've set my forces in array,
Double treble guile and cheat, that whensoe'er the foe I meet
Strong both in my forefather's sense,
And my own work and fraudulence,
Easily I win, with ease spoil by sleight my enemies,
Now this common foeman too, hate of me and all of you,
Ballio the reverend I'll bully out ; assistance lend.
He's the town to-day I'll make every move to siege and take,
To his outworks lead my legions. If I storm his lower regions
I'll give easy victories to my fellow burgesses.

Then to yonder hoary hold straight away
my army bold
Forward to the breach I'll lead.
Thence myself and all my pals load with
booty and fal-lals
Till they know me born to be fear and
flight—my enemy!
I'm descended from such breeds i
behoves me do great deeds
That high my fame and long their rede
But who's the fellow that afar
Unknown affronts my ocular
Why come here with his scimitar
I'll know, and spy him hence.

(*He hides in a porch*

HARPAX: Is this the region, this the space
My master pointed out? The place
It is, so far as eye can trace,
The Pander's residence!
The seventh house he said within
The Gate, and bade me for my sin
Take there the token and the tin.

(*Scans the houses*

Where here the Pander lives
I wish someone would say for cert-
-ain.

(*Wanders about in search of someone*

PSEUD. (*pokes head out*) :

Hush ! unless my spells desert,
'Tis he ; I must new plans concert
So suddenly he gives
New openings. This I will forestall,
And drop my former gambits all.
I'll give this military mug a fall
Who comes on messages.

HARP. : I'll knock and call forth someone hence

PSEUD. : Whoe'er you be with knocks dispense
Champion and counsel I've come thence
To save these passages !

HARP. : You're Ballio ?

PSEUD. : I'm Ballio's sub.

HARP. : What word is that ?

PSEUD. : I keep the pub',
I buttle, groce, and grab the grub !

HARP. : You seem a sort of porter.

PSEUD. : No ! I'm the porter's Emperor

HARP. : Are you a slave or freeman or . . .

PSEUD. : I'm serving now.

HARP. : You look it, nor
Look worthy to be free.

PSEUD. : Don't you look in the glass whene'er
You slander others.

HARP. (*aside*) : He's a bear !

PSEUD. (*aside*) :
God help me, but my anvil's there,
I'll forge an armoury.

HARP. : Now what's he saying to himself ?

PSEUD. : Now what's up, Captain ?

HARP. : What's up, elf ?

PSEUD. : Have you, or not, come with the pelf
From that Barbarian ?
His slave who bought a wench all found,
And paid my master fifteen pound,
Owes five ?

HARP. : I am, but on what ground,
When since the world began
Hast known me, seen, or spoken ? For
To Athens never came I, nor
Ever beheld your face before
This day with my own eyes.

PSEUD. : Because you seem to come that way.
For, when he went, he named to-day
As pay-day, yet he does not pay.

HARP. (*showing a purse*) :
In this the payment lies !

PSEUD. : You've brought it ?

HARP. : Yes.

PSEUD. : Why hesitate ?

HARP. : To give it you ?

PSEUD.: To me, yes straight.
I'm Manager of the Estate
Of Master Ballio.
Cash for your debt and to your debtor
Give.

HARP. (*ironically*):
If of course you're the begetter
Of High God's treasury, I'd better
Not trust you with a groat.

PSEUD.: We'll liquidate it in a sneeze!

HARP.: Safe on to it I'd rather freeze!

PSEUD.: Ugh! you the miracle to cheese
Me of my five-pound note!
As if I was not wont to touch
Amounts worth many hundred such.

HARP.: Others may trust you; I not much!

PSEUD.: That means then that you say
You of your cash I would relieve?

HARP.: That you say so, and I believe!
Well what name have you?

PSEUD. (*aside*): Up my sleeve!
There's in the Pander's pay
A servant Syrus; that's my game!

(*To* HARPAX)
I'm Syrus.

HARP.: Syrus?

PSEUD.: That's my name

HARP.: Our talk's breath wasted all the same,
For if your Master's home,
Whatever be your name, why not
Call him that I may transact what
I'm sent here for.

PSEUD.: If on the spot,
I'd bid my Master come.
But if you'll give the cash to me,
The payment will be much more *free*
Than if you gave it to the P.

HARP.: But Master Secretary
My Master sent me to restore
Not lose the gold. Of this I'm sure
That, as you can't put in your oar,
You're in a nice quandary.
(*Flatly*)
I'll trust to none but Ballio.

PSEUD.: He's bally full of business, though!
A case in Court.

HARP.: Well may it go!
When I think he's at home
I will come back. Take this from me
(*Gives letter*)
And give it him—the token, see?
On which our masters did agree
About Phoenicium.

PSEUD. (*glibly*) :
I know of course. The damsel ought
To go with him whoever brought
The cash, and his own likeness caught
Upon the wax ; he left
A copy here.

HARP. : You *are "au fait"* !

PSEUD. : Of course !

HARP. : Give him the token, pray.

PSEUD. : Yes, but your name ?

HARP. : Harpax.

PSEUD. : Away !
I hate you Mister . . . Theft !
Egad, you shan't come in, for fear
You prove a Harpy-harpax here.

HARP. : From foes alive I steal their gear
In battle, hence my name.

PSEUD. : From houses brazen saucepans, yes !

HARP. : No, no ! but, Syrus, can you guess
The boon I ask ?

PSEUD. (*slily*) : If you'll confess
I'll know your little game.

HARP. : Third public-house outside the Gate,
Dame Chrysis, there I'll go and wait.
You know, old limping Pots-and-Plate !

PSEUD. : But what d'ye want of me ?

HARP.: When Ballio's back to call me thence

PSEUD. (*bowing low*):
Quite at your service, Excellence!

HARP.: I'm weary with my journey; whence (*Winking*)
I want a . . . cup of tea!

PSEUD.: A good idea! A man of taste!
But mind you don't have to be chased
When fetch'd.

HARP.: In sleep my time I'll waste,
When I've dispatch'd my dinner.

PSEUD.: Well, I advise you . . .

HARP.: What?

PSEUD.: Go sleep!

HARP.: I'm going.

PSEUD.: Listen! Bid them heap
The blankets on you, Harpax, deep.
You'll do with sweating thinner!
(HARPAX *goes off by the road to the Gate*)

PSEUD.: I'm safe; he's put me on the track, yon man, by his arrival;
His journey-money's brought me back from Error to her rival.
For in the Story of Good Luck could never Good come Better
Than this whereon I now have struck so opportune, this letter!

A very Cornucopia this, wherein are
all my wishes ;
Here's guile and wile and knaveries ;
here's bait for all the fishes.
Here's money, here's a mistress for
My master's son—for Calidore.
Though how to deal with all and each
full-breasted and victorious,
And how the Pimp to over-reach, and
steal the damsel, glorious,
In file and docket and red-tape I'd every
plan in order,
All cut and dried and out of shape—
Fortune flung down her warder !
She conquers sole the counsels wise of
half a hundred sages ;
As each man uses her supplies, he find's
it Fortune's wages ;
He'll lose or win, and therefore all
Him fool or wise combine to call.
When plans succeed for anyone, we cry
" The clever fellow ! "
" The simpleton, the simpleton ! " when
luck is out, we bellow.
Fools that we're trick'd all unawares
when something that we covet
We ask devoutly in our prayers ! As if,
because we love it,
'Twere therefore good ; uncertainties we
seek, the safe we banish ;

The former end in miseries, or in hard
labour vanish.
It comes to pass that as we smile
Death's stealing over us the while.
But I've philosophised enough: I talk
too long: 'tis tedious stuff.
And on the other hand the lie was worth
its weight in gold that I
Invented on the moment's spur, that
I am Pander's housekeeper!
O letter, thou'lt outwit the three—Pimp,
Master, him who gave it me.
Hurrah! another wish come true.

(*He sees* CALIDORUS *with a stranger approaching*)

My Master with . . . the Lord knows who!

CALID.: I've told you all my joy and pain;
My love, work, poverty are plain.

CHAR.: I know; but this do not disdain,
To see your purpose stated.

CALID.: 'Twas order'd me by Pseudolus
To bring him someone strenuous
And kindly.

CHAR.: Well, you're safe with us:
With a kind friend you're freighted.
But Pseudolus I do not know

CALID.: O he's a master, as men go;
He's my Inventor and will do
The wonders I've related.

PSEUD. (*aside*) :
Shall I accost the man with state ?
CALID. : Whose voice is that ?

PSEUD. (*bowing low to* CHARINUS) :
Hail Potentate,
That dost to Pseudolus dictate ;
I ask on whom to fix
Thrice three times threefold treble joys,
Delights deserved by triple toys,
A trinity in equipoise,
Fraud, malice, knavish tricks ?
(*Holds out letter*)
These in this paper signed and seal'd
I've lately brought.

CALID. : He stands reveal'd,
Our Ancient Pistol unaneled,
Our arch-tragedian !

PSEUD. (*à la N.C.O.*) :
Close in ! Two paces to your rear !
Two paces sideways ! Without fear
Extend your arm to grasp what's dear.

CALID. : My hope or my salvation ?

PSEUD. : Why both of course.

CALID. : Hail, Both ! But say
What progress, orders ? Car je l'ai
Apporté.

PSEUD. (*horrified*) : What ?

CALID.: I mean amené.

PSEUD.: Who is your importation?

CALID.: Charinus.

PSEUD.: Good! (*Examines* CHAR.) Molto carino!

CHAR.: Give me your orders andantino.

PSEUD.: Bless you, you're very kind, Charino; I would not be a trouble.

CHAR.: You trouble me! But what you say Is trouble.

PSEUD.: Then for God's sake stay.

CALID.: What's that? (*Pointing to letter*)

PSEUD.: A catch I made to-day— Letter and token, double.

CALID.: What token?

PSEUD. (*nonchalantly*): From a soldier's kit. His servant, who was bringing it With five pounds, was the biter bit, When nibbling your amie!

CALID.: How?

PSEUD.: This is the spectators' play; They know, for they were in the way I'll tell you later.

CALID.: Now.

PSEUD.: To-day
You shall embrace her free!

CALID. (*incredulous*):
I?

PSEUD.: You yourself, if I'm alive.
If only quickly you'll contrive
To find the sort of man that I've . . .

CALID. (*quickly*):
A man of what complexion?

PSEUD.: O, clever, educated, bad,
Who straightway, when a lead he's had,
Is man enough to act, a lad
Not knave in this connexion!

CHAR.: D'ye mind a slave?

PSEUD. (*pointedly*): I like a cad!

CHAR.: I think I can provide a lad
As you say educated, bad,
Just up from home—Euboea.
He's not yet left the house; he's been
Nowhere, nor Athens has he seen
Ere yesterday.

PSEUD.: A Verdant Green
In fact! And you're a dear!
But I must find five pounds as well,
A loan to-day repayable;
I want it old Simo to sell.

CHAR.: I'll give it, and no other!

PSEUD.: You're just the man for me! A toque
I also want, a sword, a cloak . . .

CHAR.: I've all at home.

PSEUD.: You're past a joke,
Not dear, but cheap! My brother
Slave from Carystus can he smell?

CHAR.: His armpits goat-like.

PSEUD.: Like a Swell,
He must have sleeves in length an ell.
And has he gall at heart?

CHAR.: Yes, gall and vinegar.

PSEUD.: But if
We want instead a pleasant whiff,
Can he produce it in a jiff-
-y?

CHAR.: No! but from his Mart
Mead, myrtle, must, and raisin-wine,
And honey, cheap or superfine,
He'll bring as once his favourite
"line".

PSEUD.: Charinus, what a licking
You've given me at my own game!
But what on earth's the treasure's name?

CHAR.: Simia.

PSEUD.: To twist in time of shame
Has he the sense?

CHAR.: For pricking
No spinning-top prick'd half so fast.

PSEUD.: Convictions?

CHAR.: O, a lurid past!

PSEUD.: But when he's fairly caught at last?

CHAR.: Eel like he wriggles out.

PSEUD.: But is the man a man of vision?

CHAR.: There is no popular decision
More visionary.

PSEUD.: A precisian
This Prince you talk about!

CHAR.: If you but knew! When he set eyes
On you, he'll tell all sorts of lies.
But what with him's your enterprise?

PSEUD.: Of him when he is dress'd
The soldier's slave I mean to fake,
That pounds and token he may take,
And steal the girl for Master's sake.
There! All is now confess'd!
But how each marvel's to be done
Is for his ear.

CHAR.: What now's the fun?

PSEUD.: The fish and trimmings everyone
Land for me at the Bank.
Make haste.

CHAR.: I'll be there before you

PSEUD.: Then mend your pace.

(CHARINUS *and* CALIDORUS *exeunt*)

My former stew
My doubts and fears are clear as dew
The cup of fear I drank
Is filter'd; now the road is made,
My forces all I will parade,
Eyes right, and hopes as bright as braid
And everything as plann'd.
I'm sure that I can beat the foe,
Therefore to Market will I go,
And there on Simia bestow
Command upon command.
Do this; don't make a slip in that;
Let all your knaveries come pat;

(*As he passes* BALLIO'S *house*)

Yes, now these walls shall fall down flat,
The walls of Panderland.

(*Enter* BALLIO *and* CHEF)

BALLIO: He calls it wrong who calls it mart for
cooks;
A thieves' kitchen, for hire not cooks
but crooks!
For if I'd sworn to find a bigger knave,
I could not hire a braver than this
"brave",
A babbling, boastful, boorish good-for-
naught!
This is why Death refused to have him
brought,

And left him here to cook the dead men's cheese ;
For he alone can cook there what they please.

CHEF : If what they say is your opinion,
What made you hire me ?

BALLIO : Dearth—there was but one !
But why did you sit there, if you're a cook,
Alone of all the lot ?

CHEF : I'll tell you. Look !
The master cook's been made less masterly
By human greed, not genius.

BALLIO : How ?

CHEF : You'll see !
Directly men would hire a cook, 'tis clearest
They never want the man who's best and dearest ;
The very cheapest rather they engage ;
That is the reason why I held the stage.
Those beasts were shillingers, but as for me
No man can make me budge for less than three.
I'm not like many a cook, when food I flavour,
Who piles the plates with mustard-fields for savour,

Banquets . . . the beef! his craving never curbs
But seasons herbs with herbs, and herbs with herbs!
Shreds garlic, fennel, leeks, and cori--anders,
Beet, sorrel, broccoli, and broad-beans squanders,
Dilutes with silphium a pound in weight,
Grates onions vile that th' eyes of those who grate
Turn ere they've grated tear-distilleries.
When such men cook or sauce their cookeries,
They season not with any seasoning,
But rather with blood-suckers blood-sucking!
Of living guests the intestines to devour;
(That's why man's life is only for an hour!)
These horrid herbs they do for their undoing;
Rueful to tell not only in the chewing,
These herbs "whereof the ewe not bites" bite men!

BALLIO: And you? The sauce you use is godlike then;
By which the life of man you can prolong?
What makes you say their seasoning is wrong?

CHEF: Two hundred years their life (no need to quibble!)
Who nutriment that I have season'd nibble.
For when I've shredded in some pickleoni,
Some sauci-fly mosquito whacceroni,
All of themselves at once they're piping hot!
For Sea-sons you must season thus the pot.
Land-sharks with castor-oil I castigate
Or paregoric-oil in sublimate.

BALLIO: The Devil take you and your sauceries,
And all your damnable mendacities!

CHEF: Please let me speak.

BALLIO: Speak, and be off to hell!

CHEF: When all pots blaze, I lift the lids; the smell
Gives feet the go-by and goes up to heaven.

BALLIO: A smell gives feet . . .!

CHEF: I missed the evil leaven.

BALLIO: What?!

CHEF: "Hands the go-by" read when I said feet.
That smell is God Almighty's daily treat!

BALLIO: Then if you don't go out, what pray's his dinner?

CHEF: He goes to bed undined.

BALLIO: To hell, you sinner!
Was it for this your fee to-day you took?

CHEF: Of course I own I am a costly cook;
But in return I make my pains appear
Wherever I am hired . . .

BALLIO: To commandeer!

CHEF: D'you think to find a Cook with scales and balance
Who has not, sharp as hawk or eagle, talents?

BALLIO: D'you think to go and cook at any house
Unless you sheathe your talons and cook . . . grouse?
(*To a slave*)
You fellow, you are mine, I give you powers
To make away post-haste with all that's ours.
Then you must fix your eyes upon his eyes,
And spy as well wherever this man spies.
If he push here, you too push forward to't;
If he shoot out a hand, you yours outshoot

You need not heed his having, have he his'n,
But have he ours, you have him off to prison!
If he goes, go; stands, stand too on the spot;
If he squats over yonder, you too squat
A guard for these his pupils I'll allow.

CHEF: Put a good face upon it.

BALLIO: Prithee, now
Have you at home and a good face, man, say?

CHEF: Because my broth will do for you to-day,
As did Medea when she did Pelias down,
Whose medicines and potions the old clown
Made, so 'tis said, a regular broth of a boy
And so I'll do for you . . .

BALLIO: Good God! Lefroy,
The poison man!

CHEF: No, no! Man's Saviour.

BALLIO: ROT!
Your terms for coaching me to cook your . . .

CHEF: WHAT?

BALLIO: Your hash, that you may not filch hash from me

CHEF: On credit, half-a-crown; cash not for three!
But are you feasting friend to-day or foe?

BALLIO: Gadzooks! I'm feasting friend I'd have you know.

CHEF: Why not your foes instead of friends invite?
I'd serve them then a course so recondite
And with such dainty dainties seasonèd
That when each every sauce had savourèd
I'd make him nibble off his finger ends!

BALLIO: Egad I'll ask you, ere you serve my friends,
Taste first yourself and all your pupils prime
That you may nibble off your hands the crime.

CHEF: May be you don't believe me?

BALLIO: Too much talk!
Don't worry; that's my house; now in you walk.

PSEUD.: If ever 'twas the will of God that any man be aided,
He wills that I and Calidore be saved, the Pander spaded,
In giving birth to card so sharp to help me in my battling.
But where's he gone? Have I gone mad? Myself to myself prattling!
He's bluffed me, sure! a fool's defence to match a knave with innocence!
If he's absconded, then I'm done; to-day's work won't be ended.
(*Sees* SIMIA)
But there he is the Monument of Stripes, the Vision Splendid.
(*To* S.)
Ah! I was looking everywhere for you in mortal panic;
You'd gone . . .

SIMIA: To do my duty, yes!

PSEUD.: Where?

SIMIA: Somewhere Simianic!

PSEUD.: I know.

SIMIA: Then, if you know, why ask?

PSEUD.: To task you.

SIMIA : No ! you not to task.

PSEUD. : You hold me, fellow, far too light.

SIMIA : You, like the rest, I can but slight
Who am a military wight !

(*Strutting à la militaire.*)

PSEUD. : The task attempted must be done.

SIMIA : My rule of action Number One.

PSEUD. : Quick march, then.

SIMIA : Nay, I mean to creep.

PSEUD. : We've found our chance ; while he's asleep,
I mean you first to storm the keep.

SIMIA : What hurry ? Calmly ! Never fear !
God grant the soldier's Bombardier
May advertise his presence here.
He'll ne'er be Harpy worse than I,
So pluck up courage ; beautifully
I'll straighten out the mystery.
And so by wiliness and lying
I'll send this soldier-stranger flying :
In such a funk he'll be denying
That he's himself, and think that I
Am he.

PSEUD. : How can he ?

SIMIA : O, I die !
Such simple questions !

PSEUD. : Sage how sly !

SIMIA : With wiles and lying even you
Who are my Master I'll outdo.

PSEUD. : God keep you for me.

SIMIA : For me too.
But does it suit me well, this dress ?
(*Struts up and down*)

PSEUD. : A splendid fit ! Don't stumble !
(SIMIA *trips up*)

SIMIA : Bless . . .

PSEUD. (*cutting in*) :
God send you highest happiness !
For if I wish you but your worth
'Twere less than naught. I ne'er since birth
Saw such a plague of naughty earth !

SIMIA : By you my praises sung !

PSEUD. : If mum's the word, what shall I need
To feast and recompense your deed,
If coolly you to victory lead ?

SIMIA : O, can't you hold your tongue ?
The mindful unmindful makes he
Who prompts a mindful memory.
I'm primed ; my heart's my treasury ;
My wiles are nicely conn'd.

PSEUD. : This man's a Saint !

SIMIA : Nor he nor I.

PSEUD. : Lord love . . .

SIMIA (*cutting in*): Impossibility!
You pour forth neat lie after lie.

PSEUD.: O Simia, how fond
I am of all your treacherous ways!
And how I fear, and how I praise!

SIMIA: The traps I've learnt for other jays;
You can't palm off on me.

PSEUD.: I'll give you a reception nice
When you've performed our Sacrifice—
Nice food, nice wine, nice scent, a slice
Of lovely fricassee!
Between the cups a nice young miss
As well to give you kiss on kiss.

SIMIA: A nice Reception!

PSEUD.: You'll say bliss,
If only you succeed.

SIMIA: If not, the Executioner
Excruciatingly confer
His blessings on me! Show me, sir,
The Pander's door with speed.

PSEUD.: Third that way.
(*Pointing*)

SIMIA: Hush! the portals heave

PSEUD.: The house is sick I do believe.

SIMIA: But why?

PSEUD.: Itself it doth relieve
By vomiting the Pimp!

SIMIA (*staring at* BALLIO, *who is coming out of his house*).
That fellow?

PSEUD.: Yes.

SIMIA: The dirty drab!
There's naught straightforward in his hab-
-it; rather sidelong like a crab.
Observe, my friend, his limp!

(*They hide*)

BALLIO: Less bad I rate this cooking-loon;
Naught but a goblet and a spoon
As yet he's managed to harpoon.

PSEUD. (*whispering*):
Your chance and hour.

SIMIA: Agreed!

PSEUD.: Cross craftily his path: I'll hide.

SIMIA (*à la Harpax*):
I've counted carefully; inside
The Gate sixth lane; he told me I'd
Down that alley to speed.
Which house he said I don't quite know.

BALLIO: Who's this in military mantle? Oh!
He looks a foreigner and low!
Whence comes he? seeking whom?

SIMIA (*as if not seeing* BALLIO):
Here's one who'll solve the mystery.

BALLIO: He's making a bee-line for me.
A native of what far city
From Baki to Batoum?

SIMIA: You fellow there in that goatee,
Give answer to my question.

BALLIO: Gee!
No greeting first!

SIMIA: No! none for me
To give away—to you!

BALLIO: You'll get as much as you may give.

PSEUD. (*rubbing his hands*):
A bully gambit!

SIMIA: Knowst who live
In this lane?

BALLIO: Sir Inquisitive,
Myself of course I do.

SIMIA: Few men can do the thing you claim;
Scarce one in ten could say the same—
He knows himself!

PSEUD. (*ecstatic*): I've won my game!
Already splitting hairs!

SIMIA: The man I'm seeking here is bad,
A law-breaker, a dirty cad,
Forsworn and wicked.

BALLIO (*preening himself*): I'm the lad!
None else those titles bears.
(*Aside*)
If only he would let me know
The name! (*to* SIMIA) Your friend's name?

SIMIA: Ballio.

BALLIO: Know him? I'm he, young man.

SIMIA: No! No!

BALLIO: I am the man indeed.

SIMIA: You are a burglar by your dress.

BALLIO: If you saw me in darkness, yes.
You'd keep your hands off me, I guess.

SIMIA: To you it was God-speed
My Master bade me say. Receive
This letter from me; this to leave
With you he bade me.

BALLIO: Who's the Reeve
Who bade you.

PSEUD. (*aside*): Ugh! he's gravell'd;
He does not know the name. Our plot
Sticks there.

BALLIO: Who sent it? Come, d'you wot?

SIMIA: D'you know his characters, or not?
(*Holding out letter*)
If so, the knot's unravell'd!
Tell me his name that I may know
That you are very Ballio.

BALLIO: The letter, please!

SIMIA: Take it and show
You know from whom it came.

BALLIO (*excited*):
Polymachaeroplagides!
Clean kam it is! I know the wheeze
Polymachaeroplagides
Is certainly the name.

SIMIA: You say with such consummate ease
(*Spluttering*
Polymachaeroplagides,
I know I'm right to give you these.

BALLIO: His trade?

SIMIA: A doughty fighter.
But hurry up, I say, and read—
For that's my business—this screed;
And take the cash at once, and speed
The damsel to the writer.
For I must be at Sicyon
To-day, or else, ere rise the sun
Again, I shall be dead and gone,
So peremptory my Master!

BALLIO: I know; you're talking to his friend.

SIMIA: Make haste and read from end to end
His letter.

BALLIO: Silence I commend
And I'll get done the faster.
(*Reads*

" Polymachaeroplagides
The soldier sends to Ballio these
Seal'd with the likeness that agrees
With our confabulation.
The token 's in the note." I feel
And recognize his sign and seal;
His letters usually reveal
No sort of salutation.

SIMIA: Such is their military drill
Their hands salute who wish them well,
The same hands shoot who wish them ill!
But as you have begun
Go on, and by experience
Find out what is the letter's sense.

BALLIO: Pray listen: " this intelligence
I send to you by one
Harpax my groom." Is Harpax you?

SIMIA: Yes.

BALLIO: And a very Harpy too!
" Who brings the note; the money due
From him I'd have you win,
And with him eke despatch the maid.
Meet to the meet were good-bye said."
(*Abruptly*)
Give me the cash; remove the jade;

SIMIA: Who dallies?

BALLIO: In then.

SIMIA: In.
(*They enter* BALLIO'S *house*)

PSEUD.: A worse, a more consummate knave
I never saw than is this slave;
I fear and dread him knavishly
Lest knave to him be knave to me;
And me he toss in happy hour
To savage me if he's the power.
I hope not, for I wish him well,
Tho' now three fears hold me in hell:
First above all I fear lest he
Desert and join the enemy.
Lest Master home before he ought,
Preyer be prey and captor caught.
Ere Harpy two can disappear
With Fénice, Harpy One come here.
Oh dear! Oh dear! They're far too slow
My full-pack'd heart expects to go
Out of my breast to banishment;
Unless the girl with Simia's sent.

(*Sees* SIMIA *coming out, followed by* PHOENICIUM, *who is weeping*)

I've won, my wary warders tann'd!

SIMIA (*to* PH.):
Don't cry; you do not understand:
But I'll soon show how lies the land,
When we sit down to dinner.
The man to whom I take you, dear, 's
Not him, the husband of your fears
Who makes you now a flood of tears,
The Macedonian sinner;
Whose most you wish to be instead,

To him I vow you shall be led,
To Calidore's embrace and bed
I'll see you presently!

PSEUD.: Why loiter, pray, so long inside?
My heart with beating on my side
Is bruised.

SIMIA: Birch-rod personified,
You've found your chance to ply
With questions, as the enemy
With ambushes! Why don't we flee
On seven-leagued boots from Pandery?

PSEUD.: A scamp you are, but right.
Off this way to the flowing bowl
Of victory.

(*They go off hurriedly.* BALLIO *comes out*)

BALLIO: Ha! ha! my soul
Is safe at last and Harpy-whole!
Now both are out of sight,
The girl and he, bid Pseudolus
That rogue unhung come here to us,
And by deceptions devious
Steal from me that young girl!
I know for sure in language fair
I'd sooner scores of times forswear
Than for his sake the fool's cap wear.
Foolscap at him I'll hurl
Whene'er I meet him; nay, he will
Be doing, as was fixed, treadmill.

Would Simo but come up the hill
To share my joy. (*Hears voices*)
But hist!

SIMO: How my Ulysses fares I'd know.
Has he from Castle Ballio
Already ta'en the goddess.

BALLIO (*rushes up to him*): O
Blest sir, your blessèd fist!
(*Holds out hands*)

SIMO: What's up?

BALLIO: Now . . .

SIMO: Now?

BALLIO: There's nought to dread.

SIMO: Well, has the fellow visited
Your house.

BALLIO: No.

SIMO: Then good news has fled.

BALLIO: You've saved the twenty pounds.
For which he bargain'd at your hand!

SIMO: I wish I had.

BALLIO: From me demand
The twenty if he has trepann'd
The damsel from my grounds
To-day, or to your son to-day
Will give her as he promised; pray
Demand the; yes, I long to say,
By every means to show

Your property is safe. The jade
Keep for yourself

SIMO: I'm not afraid
To bargain as the bargain's made.
You'll give me twenty?

BALLIO: So!

SIMO: So far, so good. But now let's hear
How it is that you do not fear
His tricks.

BALLIO: Because the girl from here
He will not, can not, get!

SIMO: Why?

BALLIO: You remember that I told
You how the girl had long been sold
To a Macedonian Captain bold?

SIMO: Yes.

BALLIO: Payment of the debt
His servant brought me and a to-
-ken seal'd.

SIMO: What next?

BALLIO: He who did go
'Twixt me and him, not long ago
Took off with him Miss Pretty.

SIMO (*incredulous*):
That's honour bright?

BALLIO: What's that to me?

SIMO: Lest this be his devising see.

BALLIO: The seal and letter prove 'twas he
Who's ta'en her from the city.

SIMO: That's capital! Why not despatch
Our Pseudolus to Colney Hatch.

(*Catches sight of* HARPAX.)

But who's that mantled Bandersnatch,
Who's in the offing here?

BALLIO: Egad, I cannot say, unless
I watch him at his business;
And where he's going I can't guess
Until he comes more near.

HARPAX (*singing to the tune of 'Here's a how-d'ye-do!'*):

O a naughty knave
Is the master's slave
Who's neglectful of his bidding,
Memory of duty ridding
Short of warning grave.
Yes, a naughty knave!

If they are not spied,
If themselves they hide,
Like a horse that's free from hobble,
Then they wanton, revel, gobble;
Slavery's their pride,
If they are not spied!

They no good intend ;
Wantonly they spend
Naughty tricks their nest to feather,
They and I ne'er come together ;
I am not their friend,
They no good intend !

Though he is away,
" Master's here " I say ;
Pay attention to his orders,
His return when off the borders
Fear lest it dismay,
Though he is away.

In the Tavern have I stay'd
Hitherto, as Syrus bade,
To whom I gave the token.
When the Pander was at home,
Then he promised me to come
But his word he's broken.
Since he does not come nor call,
Here I am to fathom all
Lest the words he's spoken
Were a swindle. With my stick
Here I'd better batter quick
Till some one's awoken.

(*Goes up to* BALLIO'S *house and batters at it with his stick.* BALLIO *comes behind him*)

HARPAX : I want the Pimp this £ s. d.
To take, and send away with me
The damsel.

BALLIO (*to* SIMO): Hi!

SIMO: What's up?

BALLIO: 'Tis he!
It is my lawful plunder!
He wants the girl; he has the cash;
I long to cook the rascal's hash.

SIMO: D'you mean to gobble up such trash?

BALLIO: Before he learn his blunder.
When he's in generous mood, blows hot,
He must be gobbled; good men rot
My gain; the bad enrich my pot;
Bad, I win; good, the Mob!

SIMO: God will chastise you for your crime.

HARP.: If I don't knock, I'm wasting time;
To know if Ballio's back home, I'm
Too long about the job!

BALLIO: These blessings Venus sends me when
She drives like sheep into my pen
Lovers of darkness, naughty men,
Indulgent of their youth
In eating, drinking, chambering.
Far other your imagining
Who won't indulge in one good thing,
To those who have, sans ruth

HARP.: Where are you?

BALLIO (*seeing* HARPAX *approach*):
Coming this way straight!

HARP.: Where are you?

BALLIO: What d'ye lack, my mate? (*aside*)
I'll fleece this victim designate;
The omens all are good!

HARP.: Come, open.

BALLIO: Stranger, what d'ye lack?

HARP.: I'm on the Pander Ballio's track.

BALLIO: Your painful search you now may slack,
And drop your cloak and hood.

HARP.: Why so?

BALLIO: You see him face to face.

HARP. (*pointing at* SIMO):
You're him!

SIMO (*angrily*): Beware you do not place
Your head in claws of crook'd disgrace.
At him point; he's the Pimp.

BALLIO (*bowing ironically*):
But he's a gentleman, good sir;
While you are often courtier,
For in the Courts you make a stir.
The value of a shrimp
You haven't got without my aid.

HARP.: O stuff and nonsense!

BALLIO: Stuff, you said?

HARP.: Here, take the cash.

BALLIO: I've long time made
Advances, if you're giving!

HARP.: Take; here are five golden guineas.
My Master bade me bring you these—
Polymachaeroplagides.
His debt; to you your living.
And please to send Fénice with me.

BALLIO: Your Master?

HARP.: Yes.

BALLIO: A soldier?

HARP.: Oui.

BALLIO: A Macedonian?

HARP.: Certainly.

BALLIO: And you were sent here by
Polymachaeroplagides?

HARP.: That's right.

BALLIO: To give me five guineas?

HARP.: If you're the Pander Ballio, please.

BALLIO: And take the girl?

HARP.: Ay, ay!

BALLIO: He call'd her Fénice?

HARP.: Right again.

BALLIO (*going to* SIMO):
Stop, I'll come back.

HARP.: With might and main
Make haste: to haste I am full fain;
The sun is high, you see.

BALLIO: I see; I want this man's advice;
Please stop, I'll come back in a trice.
(*To* SIMO)
What now, Simo? What's our device?
For this is clearly he.
You know the meaning of this dance?

SIMO: I'm in profoundest ignorance.

BALLIO: He masquerades as some free-lance
Sent by the foreigner.
But he's in Pseudolus' pay.

SIMO: You've got the money from him, eh?

BALLIO: You see I have.

SIMO: Remember, pray,
One half on me confer.
We must go shares.

BALLIO: In punishment?
That's all your own.

HARP. (*impatient*): Will you attend
To me soon?

BALLIO (*sardonically*): Yes, I am, my friend.
What's your advice, Simo?

SIMO: Make game of this spy in disguise
Until himself he realize
That he's our game.

BALLIO (*going back to* HARPAX, *excited*) :
This way. (*to* H.) Your cry's
That you're his slave, fellow ?

HARP. : Most certainly.

BALLIO (*contemptuously*) : At what price bought

HARP. (*proudly*) :
I am the prize for which he fought.
A mighty Emperor was I thought
At home, in my country.

BALLIO : Did he once storm your native jail ?

HARP. : If you indulge in insult, quail !

BALLIO : And here from Sicyon you hail
In full days how many ?

HARP. : Two days by noon.

BALLIO (*in scorn*) : Gad, he can go !
As fleet as lightning this fellow !
Look at his ankles, and you'll know
He wants a heavy chain.

HARP. : Go and be crucified !

BALLIO : You may
Yourself be granted that to-day.

HARP. : Give me the damsel, or else pay.

BALLIO : Stop.

HARP. : Why should I remain ?

BALLIO: Tell me for what you hired your plaid.
What price your sword?

HARP.: The man is mad!

BALLIO: And what reward's your master had
This morning for your bonnet?

HARP.: Master! You dream. They're mine, all these.

BALLIO: Then answer straight my questions, please
Your wages? And how little he's
Spent—Pseudolus—upon it?

HARP.: Who's Pseudolus?

BALLIO: Your tutor, who
Taught you these tricks, that thereby you
Might steal from me my girl.

HARP.: What Pseu-
-dolus? What tricks d'ye mean?

BALLIO: No gain for rascals here to-day.
Therefore to Pseudolus you'll say,
Another's carried off his prey
Who came first on the scene,
Harpax.

HARP.: Egad, Harpax I am!

BALLIO: You'ld like to be; you are clean kam!

HARP. : The gold I've given you's no sham.
And long ago I gave
The token here before the door,
A letter seal'd and made more sure
By master's likeness unto your
Own confidential slave.

BALLIO : A letter to my slave ? What slave ?

HARP. : Syrus.

BALLIO : Not true ; the man's a knave,
And nothing worth his thoughts most grave,
The rascal Pseudolus !
Now cleverly his craft he sow'd,
And all the cash the soldier owed
Upon this ruffian did unload
To steal the girl from us.
The real Harpax brought to me
The letter.

HARP. : Harpax ? I am he.
The Macedonian's slave is me !
And Harpax is his name.
I'm not a knave or malefactor,
And Pseudolus that bad charàcter
Know not from any other actor,
Nor ever have.

SIMO (*chuckling*) : The game
And girl, unless there intervene
Some miracle quite unforseen,
You've lost.

BALLIO: That more and more I've been
In dread of while he's spoken.
His Syrus gave me quite a stroke,
Who took the token. What a joke!
'Tis Pseudolus. What sort of bloke
To whom you gave the token?

HARP.: Red-hair, pot-bellied, ankles thick,
Big head, sharp eyes, dark, lips red-brick,
And giant feet . . .

BALLIO: You've done the trick,
Now that you've mention'd feet.
'Twas Pseudolus! All's up! I die

HARP.: Die I'll not let you: no! not I,
If you don't give me twenty mnae.

SIMO: Twenty to me repeat.

BALLIO: The prize I promised for a jest?

SIMO: Yes, prize or prey from rogues 'tis best
To take away.

BALLIO: Then manifest-
-ly Pseudolus is mine.

SIMO: Give Pseudolus to you? For what?
I warned you often, did I not,
Against him?

BALLIO: Well, I've caught it hot.

SIMO: I'm fined a paltry twenty.

BALLIO: What shall I do?

HARP. : When I've my cash,
Go hang yourself.

BALLIO : And you God smash.
Well bankwards both to draw the trash
From changers that have plenty.

SIMO : And me ?

BALLIO : I'll settle strangers first.
To-morrow townsmen do their worst.
By Pseudolus my Bank is burst
In Court of Common Pleas—
He and his girl-thief ! (*to* H.) You come my way ;
Don't think I'll come back by the high-way ;
Things have so gone that every by-way
I must slink down.

HARP. : With ease
You might have touched at twenty Banks
If only you had stirr'd your shanks
Fast as your tongue.

BALLIO : My birthday ranks
As death-day to my fees !
(*Dashes out with* HARPAX *at his heels*)

SIMO : I've touched him up ; the Slave his foe
Has touched up too at touch and go !
Now I'm resolved by other ways
Than happens in the other plays
For Pseudolus to set a trap,

For there by thrashings and mishap
They lay an ambush ; I'll inside.
The twenty mnae I prophesied,
If he succeeded, I will fetch
And unask'd offer the poor wretch.
He's far too clever for a man,
Too bad, too catch-me-if-you-can !
His trick outdoes the Trojan horse ;
Ulysses ? Pseudolus of course !
So I'll go in, fetch out the money—
My trap won't Pseudolus think funny ?

(*Curtain as he goes into his house*)

## ACT IV

(*Enter* PSEUDOLUS *lurching along with a bottle in his hand. He stops with a stagger and addresses his feet.*)

PSEUD.: What's that? Your Master thus you treat?
Will you hold up, or not, my feet?
I fall, and yours the fault will be.
Still running?

(*He falls down*)

A back-seat for me!

(*Looks up, ruefully*)

That's worst of wine—it's devilish neat;
It always collars by the feet.
So then it wasn't all a joke,
I've really had a lovely soak,
So exquisitely cook'd the food,
And all the trimmings just as good.
A merry welcome merry meant
In such a place of merriment.
What's good of all this circuml'-cution?
Why man loves life finds here solution.

(*Holds up bottle*)

Here's every pleasure, every charm,
Mellifluous cup and snow-white arm

Well-met in toasting loveliest love
I think comes next to gods above.
Thro' this none hates his neighbour, nor
Becomes a prosy tedious bore.
  Perfume, savour,
  Garland, favour,
Not to speak of victuals braver,
Not thrown with thrift, but given galore.

Thus have I and my young Master
Made the hours run faster faster,
Now the foe are on the run,
And the work I plann'd is done.
Them I've left behind at meat
Eating, drinking, lovering,
With their sweetings and my sweet,
Heart and fancy following.
When I rose, at once they sued
For dancing; I an attitude
Struck in not too sober mood.
When a pupil in the schools
Well I learnt the lighter rules
This was how I hung my cloak,
Cut my capers, crack'd my joke.

(*Dances and attitudinizes*)

They recall'd me, cried "Encore",
This was how I gave them more.

(*Dances again*)

Gave them? I was more for giving
Love for love to best love living.

Thus revolving down I fell;
That was gambolling's death-knell.
In my struggles I ex-pired!
Trailing cloak I all but mired.
'Twas a case of trop de—pleasure!
To console me, this full measure
I drank, changed my peccant cloak,
Came out—to rid me of my soak.

(*Staggers up to* SIMO'S *door, and stumbles against it*)

Open, open, some one behind.
Old Master now I must remind
Of our compact. Some one find
Simo, and say I'm here.

SIMO: What scurvy knave is summoning me?
What's this? How now? What's this I see?

PSEUD.: Your Pseudolus crown'd ti-tipsy.

SIMO: Liberty Hall, I fear!
Ugh! look at his disgusting state.
It seems his fears I aggravate:
Roughly or mildly shall I rate
Him, that is now my wonder.
I mustn't give the brute the rope
If I've a single ray of hope
With men like him who have to cope,
And carry with me plunder.

PSEUD.: We two now meet, the good and evil

SIMO: God bless you, Pseudolus.

(PSEUDOLUS *belches*)

The devil!

(*Beats him*)

PSEUD.: Why beat me?

SIMO: Why spue up your revel,
You drunkard, in my face?

PSEUD.: Please hold me gently, lest I fall.
I ooze with booze

SIMO: Your cheek beats all!
By daylight with a coronal
To run your drunken race!

PSEUD.: I like it.

SIMO: Like! Don't belch at me.

PSEUD.: I love my belching: 'tis so free!

SIMO: I really think, Iniquity,
The four best vintages
Of Massic in one hour you'd drain

PSEUD.: Say winter hour.

SIMO: By that you'd gain.
But tell me from what rich champaign
Your boatful sails the seas.

PSEUD.: With Calidore my drinking-bout.
But, Simo, Ballio's up the spout!
And every promise carried out!

SIMO: You laugh, and he's no match!

PSEUD.: The laugh is hers who's sitting free
With Calidore.

SIMO: The whole story
I know.

PSEUD.: Then quick, the £ s. d.

SIMO: A just demand. Here, catch!

(*Throws purse*)

PSEUD.: You said you wouldn't, yet you do.
So load your donkey and pursue.

SIMO: Load him with this?

(*Flourishing cudgel*)

PSEUD.: 'Twould be like you.

SIMO (*in mock despair*):
What shall I do with him?
To take my cash and scoff at me!

PSEUD.: Woe to the conquer'd.

SIMO: Well then, flee!

PSEUD.: Ha! ha!

SIMO: I never thought 'twould be
My turn my sails to trim
Before the blast of his nostril
O dear! O dear!

PSEUD.: Hush!

SIMO : I feel ill.

PSEUD. : If not, I should go through the mill!

SIMO : Take this from your poor master?

PSEUD. : With all my will and all my heart.

SIMO : Not grace me with a tiny part?

PSEUD. : Don't call me greedy. You'll depart
Richer for this by . . . naught!
If I'd not carried out my threat,
For my poor back you would not fret.

SIMO : Vengeance is mine. I'll not forget.
If I live you'll be taught.

PSEUD. : Why threaten? I've a back!

SIMO (*flourishes cudgel*) : Come on.

PSEUD. : Backwater! No deception.

SIMO : Well?

PSEUD. : Drink with me a demi-john.

SIMO : I?

PSEUD. : Let my will be done.
If you come, you'll have half or more.

SIMO : Lead, and I'll sail to any shore.

PSEUD. : You won't be wiping off your score
On me or on your son
For this, Simo?

SIMO: No! No! All right

PSEUD.: This way.

SIMO: I'll come. Why not invite
The audience that's here to-night?

PSEUD.: It isn't ever done.
(*Turns to audience.*
But if you like to clap and say
You like the troupe and like the play,
I'll ask you here another day.

CURTAIN

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# BROADWAY TRANSLATIONS

1925

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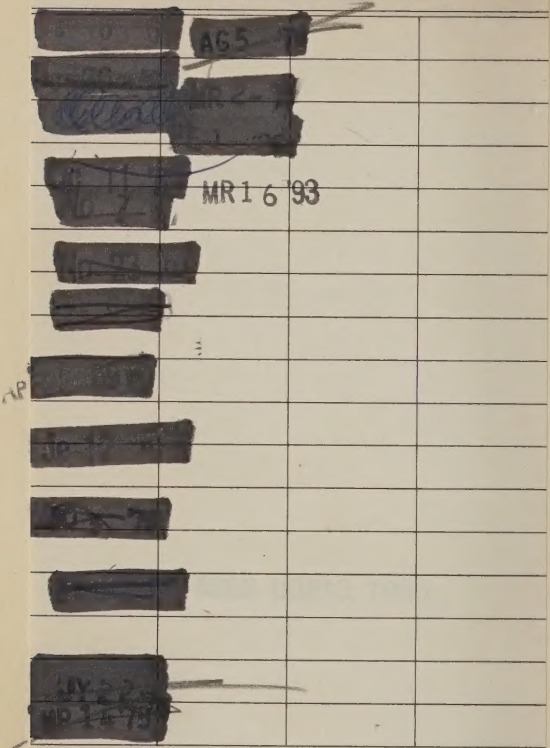


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